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The Influence of Music
on History and
Morals



THE INFLUENCE OF MUSIC
ON HISTORY AND MORALS
A VINDICATION OF PLATO

by
CYRIL SCOTT



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DEDICATED
TO THE MEMORY OF
NELSA CHAPLIN

FOREWORD

THIS book, even though it be a vindication of the immortal Plato, is likely to meet with a stormy reception. Many of its readers will probably imagine that, being a musician myself, I am merely exploiting my own art and extolling it in a measure far above its deserts. Others will wonder whether perhaps I have not written the whole volume "with my tongue in my cheek"—possibly for the sheer amusement of setting the musical public "by the ears." And although I shall sympathise with those who may cast such aspersions upon me, I can only deny that there is any truth in them : I have written this book for neither of those reasons. Equally, to maintain that I have been quite sincere in my intentions will no doubt be to evoke the remark that I must possess a most vivid imagination ! Very good—even with the reader who may cast *that* aspersion I sympathise—perhaps it is true, and perhaps it is not. In any case, I expect it (and many another in the same vein), and all I can say is that a man who minds what he *expects* had best not write books at all. The fact remains, as Bernard Shaw has pointed out, that it is not the utterance of what is generally considered to be "improper" that is apt to give offence, but the utterance of what is

unusual. And it is just this offence of which I have been guilty in the following pages. My whole contention relative to music could hardly offend the most straitlaced Victorian old maid on grounds of impropriety, but it may offend a number of "old maids of both sexes" on grounds of unusualness.

And at that I must leave it—to "the mangling tooth of criticism."

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PART I
BIOGRAPHICAL, ANALYTICAL,
ÆSTHETICAL

THE INFLUENCE OF MUSIC ON HISTORY AND MORALS

CHAPTER I

THE EFFECTS OF SOUND AND MUSIC

“The influence of music on the development of religion is a subject which would repay a sympathetic study.”

FRAZER: *The Golden Bough*.

THROUGHOUT the ages, philosophers, religionists and savants have realised the supreme importance of sound. In those most ancient scriptures, the Vedas, it is stated that the world was brought into manifestation through the agency of sound ; and, later on, the author of St. John's Gospel expressed, in effect, the same truth, when he wrote : “*In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God.*” The writer of the Book of Joshua must also have possessed some knowledge of the power of sound, otherwise it is unlikely that he would have written the story of the Fall of Jericho. Further, there are the Greek and Roman philosophers, Pythagoras, Aristotle, Seneca and others, who, as their readers know, speculated upon the mysteries of sound, and through their intuition arrived at conclusions which might with justice be termed scientific. Centuries later, Lord Bacon brought his remarkable mind to bear on the subject, and wrote : “The nature of sounds hath in some sort been enquired as far as concerneth music, but the nature of sound, in general, hath been superficially observed. It

is one of the subtlest pieces of nature." Finally, in comparatively modern times, we have the eminent scientists, Professor Hermann Helmholtz and Dr. Rudolf Koenig, whose investigations and discoveries in the domain of acoustics have reaped for them the harvest of a well-earned fame.

It has been proved that sound can be both *constructive* and *destructive* : it can create forms, it can also destroy forms. From a chaotic sprinkling of sand on a glass plate, geometrical patterns may be formed with the aid of a violin-bow drawn across the edge of the plate ; a fact which goes to prove the constructive effect of sound-vibrations. Conversely, the sound of the human voice may be employed to shatter a tumbler or wine-glass to atoms.

But, apart from all this, it is patent to every one who has given the subject a moment's thought that it is to sound, and to sound alone, that we originally owe our power to communicate one with another. This power, in its most elementary form, is first perceived in the animal—it reaches its culmination in the speech of Man. From speech to the most elementary form of song was but a step, and, with the taking of that step, music came into being.

And if sound in itself is of such importance, what may be said of it when blended and mellowed to form the art of music ? For answer, let us turn to one of the greatest thinkers of all times. "Musical training," writes Plato, "is a more potent instrument than any other, because rhythm and harmony find their way into the inward places of the soul, on which they mightily fasten, imparting grace, and making the soul of him who is rightly educated, graceful." So pronounced, indeed, was Plato's opinion of the effects of music that in another part of his *Republic* he says : "*The introduction of a new kind of music*" (this also included poetry and dancing) "*must be*

shunned as imperilling the whole State ; since styles of music are never disturbed without affecting the most important political institutions." Nor was Plato alone in his opinion, for Aristotle undoubtedly shared it when he wrote . . . "emotions of any kind are produced by melody and rhythm ; therefore by music a man *becomes accustomed* [*italics ours*] to feeling the right emotions ; *music has thus the power to form character*, and the various kinds of music based on the various modes, may be distinguished by their effects on character—one, for example, working in the direction of melancholy, another of effeminacy ; one encouraging abandonment, another self-control, another enthusiasm, and so on through the series."

Such, then, were the opinions of these ancient philosophers whose writings have long survived the dust of Time. Yet, although they so forcibly expressed themselves relative to the comparatively simple music of their day, it seems to have struck very few writers, let alone the laymen of our present generation, that various types of a music far more complex, far more powerful, possess qualities other than purely artistic, pleasure-giving, transiently soul-stirring or conversely soothing. For years music lovers have listened to the Oratorios of Handel, to the Symphonies of Beethoven, to the Etudes of Chopin, and to the Operas of Wagner, and have realised that each of those master-musicians has created a special individual style, and that a Beethoven symphony is an entirely different work of art from an oratorio of Handel : nevertheless, not one of these music lovers appears to have credited either Handel or Beethoven with exercising a definite and general influence on character and morals ; and, no doubt, if they have read Plato's views on music and its effects, they will merely have considered him the victim of an erstwhile superstition, as Dr. Jowett likewise considered him, because he was credulous (?) enough to believe in the immortality of the soul. That modern

psychological science—apart from all religious assertions—is vindicating Plato's opinion relative to immortality, any person can ascertain for himself,¹ but, as to his opinion relative to the influence of music, this is left for us to vindicate in the pages of this book. We purpose, in fact, to show that each specific type of music has exercised a pronounced effect on history, on morals and on culture ; that music—however horrifying this statement may appear to the orthodox—is a more potent force in the moulding of character than religious creeds, precepts or moral philosophies ; for although these latter show the desirability of certain qualities, it is music which facilitates their acquisition. We will now proceed to explain and elaborate the why and wherefore of this contention.

A little reflection on the subject must bring us to the conclusion that music operates on the mind and emotions of man through the medium of *suggestion*. To paraphrase Aristotle's statement, if we repeatedly hear melancholy music, we tend to become melancholy ; if we hear gay music, we tend to become gay, and so forth. Thus the particular emotion which a given piece of music depicts is reproduced in ourselves ; it operates through the law of correspondences ; furthermore, our researches have proved to us that not only the emotional content but the essence of the actual musical *form*² tends to reproduce itself in human conduct ; hence, we may with justification formulate the following axiom—*as in music, so in life*. And it is very important that the reader should bear this axiom in mind in considering all that follows, for though we may occasionally repeat it, we do not wish to incur the danger of "rendering uncomplimentary assistance to the reader's wit."

¹ For instance, Ernesto Bozzano, after thirty-five years of first-hand investigation of super-normal phenomena, affirms that they can only be accounted for by "a spirit independent of the material organism."

² See Chapter XXVII., dealing with the effects of *Canon*.

Psychological investigation has proved that by the repetition of a formula suggesting physical or moral qualities, those qualities can actually be acquired. A case in point is the application of M. Coué's formula : " Day by day in every way I get better and better." And it should be noted that the more quiescent the patient, the more efficacious the suggestion, for in the quiescent state, the spirit of opposition has no occasion to assert itself. Music is a species of formula, with the additional advantage of not being expressed in words which could arouse this spirit of opposition—we do not, of course, refer to songs. It is so insidious that it *suggests* while the listener remains unaware of the fact.¹ All that he realises is that it awakens certain emotions, and that in degree those same emotions are always awakened by the same or similar musical compositions. Music, therefore, is constantly *suggesting* to him states of emotion and reproducing them in him, and as *emotional* habits are as readily formed as, or even more readily than, other habits, they eventually become a part of his character. It is obvious that Aristotle was aware of this when he wrote that " by music a man *becomes accustomed* to feeling the right emotions " ; and as for Plato and his more startling contention that " styles of music are never disturbed without affecting the most important political institutions," one need only observe the behaviour of the crowd at a political meeting to realise the part which the emotions play in politics. The mass does not think with its reason, but with its feelings ; it is only the sane, controlled logician who really thinks with his reasoning faculties. But in maintaining this we do not intend to imply that music operates on the emotions only : there are several

¹ Why the results of " musical suggestion " are not so specific and concentrated as those of ordinary suggestion is obvious. A man may confine himself to the repetition of one formula for months, but he may hear hundreds of varying types of music during the same period.

types of music which operate on the mind. Thus we shall see in due course that Bach's music had a very definite effect on the mentality—for, in accordance with our axiom, as Bach's art is of an intellectual type, it produces an intellectual effect.

But the question arises, has music, at any rate in the past, been sufficiently disseminated to bring about such prodigious effects on mankind in general as are claimed for it in this book? In other words, how can music have influenced collective thought, unless so widely diffused as to operate directly on the greater bulk of humanity: have there not been vast numbers of people who seldom, if ever, heard music of a serious character? Yet although the question is pertinent, it is easily answered. History shows that rulers and leaders of thought—and it is these who are chiefly concerned—have nearly always been in contact with some form of music. Kings, dukes, popes and princes have had their "court musicians"; feudal lords and barons have had their bards, while the masses have at any rate had their folk-music. From the most ancient times, wherever there has been any degree of civilisation, music has played a *rôle* of more or less importance. And the following point should be emphasised: that wherever the greatest variety of musical styles has obtained, there the adherence to tradition and custom has been proportionately less marked; and where musical styles are limited, as, for instance, in China, adherence to, nay, even worship of, tradition obtains to a marked degree. We are fully aware that in stating this we would seem to be lending weight to the prevalent notion that styles of music are merely the outcome and expression of civilisations and national feelings—that is to say, that the civilisation comes first, and its characteristic species of music afterwards. But an examination of history proves the truth to be exactly the reverse: an innovation in musical style has invariably been followed by an innovation in

politics and morals ; and, what is more, as our chapters on Egypt and Greece will show, the decline of music in those two instances was followed by the complete decline of the Egyptian and Grecian civilisations themselves.

There is one more point to be noted in this preliminary chapter. We have to take into account that element in the masses which causes them merely to reflect or absorb the opinions of others, whether those others be leaders or merely characters more forceful than themselves. Thus, even in times when music of every description was not broadcasted as it is to-day, assuming that a number of people never heard a note of music at all—which is unlikely—they were none the less influenced *indirectly* by it, and this also applies to the frankly unmusical. Consequently a large portion of this book is concerned as much with the indirect effects of music as with the direct ones. For instance, the direct influence of Handel's music was, among other things, to inspire awe and reverence, but the indirect effects were, as we shall see, to engender some of the less agreeable characteristics of the Victorian era.

It is our task to show the various ramifications, outcroppings, by-products and composite influences of music in general, from the earliest times to the present day. But, for reasons of expediency, we propose to deviate from the usual course of "beginning at the beginning," and, instead, to commence with those comparatively recent master musicians dating from Handel. This analysis will occupy two parts of the book, and will be mostly concerned with the effect of music on morals, art, etc., while the third part will be devoted to its effect on history dating from remote periods up to the time of Handel. This inverted procedure has been adopted because, whereas the reader is likely to be familiar with comparatively recent music, and hence in a better position to follow the argument, he is less likely to be familiar with ancient music. However, when once the premise has been accepted, he

will have no difficulty in following cause and effect in relation to that music with which he is not actually familiar.

To summarise : Music affects the minds and emotions of mankind.

It either affects them consciously or subconsciously, or both.

It affects them through the medium of suggestion and reiteration.

It affects them either directly, indirectly, or both.

Hence, as in music, so in life.

CHAPTER II

GEORGE FREDERICK HANDEL AND THE VICTORIAN ERA

IN 1710, Georg Friedrich Haendel, born at Halle, in Saxony, and known to the English as Handel, visited London ; but, as he was under an engagement to the Elector of Hanover—afterwards George I. of England—his visit was a short one. He returned, however, in 1712, and obtained a pension of £200 per annum from Queen Anne, at whose command he had written a “Te Deum” and a “Jubilate” to celebrate the peace of Utrecht. From that time onward until his death in 1759 he lived in this country, and to the influence of his music we largely owe the characteristics of the Victorian era. It was, in fact, his exalted mission to revolutionise the state of English morals ; it was he who came to be responsible, so to speak, for the swing of the moral pendulum from the one extreme of laxity to the other of almost undue constraint. That his works should have taken some time to bear fruit is due to the fact that the higher type of music is less speedy in its results than the lighter-veined ; the former being less often played. We must also take into consideration that Handel did not reach his maturity until about 1739, when *Israel in Egypt* was first performed ; it is therefore no matter for surprise that the full and many-sided influence of his music was not disseminated until the Victorian era was well under way.

The effects of the Handel oratorio—for we are less concerned with his other work—were the awakening of

reverence and awe¹ with all their concomitants and consequences ; the nature of these latter will be understood when we say that it is largely, though indirectly, owing to Handel that the Victorian age was so steeped in conventions, and that many of its people were prudish, punctilious, and, unfortunately, even tainted with priggishness. But we should add that these undesirable attributes must be regarded as the defects of *qualities*, as the inevitable result of Handel's influence on certain temperaments. There *are* people to whom moderation of any sort is unknown, which should be borne in mind when considering the contents of this chapter.

In writing a book of this nature, it is important that all considerations of personal taste and preference should be excluded ; it is for this reason that we make no apology for citing the opinions of others in connection with those composers under review. But we have further reasons : it is essential to obtain some idea of how those great creative talents were regarded at an earlier epoch than that at which we write—at an epoch when the elaborations and complexities of more modern composers were unknown. In other words, how did Handel strike the people of that era which he was instrumental in moulding ? To answer this question, we will quote from a series of lectures delivered by a noted divine of the Victorian period.

“The works of Haydn,” he maintained, “of Beethoven, Mozart, Mendelssohn, Spohr and others—great masters !—are performed, and they are admired, and justly so, but they have not the hold upon the taste and feelings (of Englishmen at least) that Handel has. He is the greatest and the favourite. He stands alone. His great productions are unaffected by time. The vicissitudes caused by varying fashions, by changing tastes, or changing schools are temporary. We cannot conceive the possi-

¹ See Notes (1).

bility of any human composition permanently taking the place of the *Messiah*. There has of late years been a great revival of taste for high music, but the more high music is cultivated, the more marked amongst great composers is the supremacy of Handel.

"To state as briefly as possible the general grounds on which I argue the merits of Handel as a composer, I should say they are—first, the majesty and sublimity with which he treats his subject ; second, his great power in pathos ; and third, generally in an exquisite *appropriateness* of his music to the words he has set." ¹

But if these eulogies go to prove the esteem in which his works were held, the following encomium, from the pen of a contemporary Mus. Doc. is even more significant. "The choruses," he writes, making comparisons favourable to Handel, "of Mozart and Beethoven are frequently *magnificent*, but seldom *sublime*." ² It is, in fact, the sublimity of Handel's music which impressed so forcibly his many admirers. "Other composers may at times be grand and powerful," as the reverend lecturer we have first quoted continues, "but they lack the *simple grandeur* with which Handel can bring forth his ideas. . . . He produces some of his most touching and most sublime effects by efforts which are wonderfully simple. . . . What mortal composition is more solemn, more moving than . . . the 'Dead March in Saul ?' And yet, as far as any real science or modulation is concerned, it might have been written by a young lady in a boarding-school. Now . . . it is a mark of real power and of very elevated capacity for a composer to produce what is great art and at the same time simple."

These eloquent tributes to Handel's awe-and-reverence awakening influence might be multiplied, but we will be content with two other citations, one from the *Quarterly*

¹ Dean Ramsay, "The Genius of Handel."

² Dr. Crotch, "Lectures on Music."

Review, the other from Dr. Gregory's biography of the Rev. Robert Hall. "We feel," runs the first of these, "on returning from hearing the *Messiah*, as if we had shaken off some of our dirt and dross, as if the world were not so much with us; our hearts are elevated, and yet subdued, as if the glow of some action, or the grace of some noble principle had passed over us. We are conscious of having indulged in an enthusiasm which cannot lead us astray, of tasting a pleasure which is not of the forbidden tree, for it is the only one which is distinctly promised to be translated with us from earth to heaven."

Nor is the second citation in its own way less pregnant with meaning. "Mr. Hall," it runs, "was present in Westminster Abbey at Handel's commemoration. The King, George III., and his family were in attendance. At one part of the performance of the *Messiah* (the Hallelujah chorus) the King stood up, a signal for the whole audience to rise; he was shedding tears. Nothing, said Robert Hall, had ever affected him more strongly; it seemed like a great act of national assent to the fundamental truths of religion."

Having obtained sufficient evidence, then, of the general and essential influence of Handel's music, we will now deal with those outcroppings already mentioned, and their cause.

Those who have closely examined Handel's technique will observe that he had a strong predilection for the repetition of single chords, for two or more bar phrases, and for *sequences*—viz. : the reiteration of a phrase in a different position or on a different degree of the scale.¹ Thus, apart from its emotional content, Handel's music was pre-eminently formal in character, consequently it was formal in effect. If, however, we combine its emotional qualities with its formalism, and to repetition and musical imitativeness—for sequence is but imitative-

¹ See Notes (2).

ness—add grandeur, the net result is the glorification of repetition and imitativeness ; and if we translate all this from the plane of music to that of human conduct, we get love of outward ceremony and adherence to convention. For, after all, what is conventionalism ? It is simply the glorification, however unconscious, of imitativeness. As a musical sequence is the imitation of a phrase under slightly different *musical* circumstances, so is conventionalism the imitation of other people's thoughts and actions under slightly different *material* circumstances. But to this conventionalism we have still to add the feelings of awe and reverence mentioned at the beginning of the chapter, and the net result is veneration for tradition, a degree of Puritanism and all that accrues from it—in certain conditions ugliness, gloom, pietism, over punctilious observance of the Sabbath, and so forth.

Yet, in enumerating these less beautiful and less direct effects of Handel's genius, these Victorian characteristics, which in the twentieth century we have come to regard with a degree of amusement if not contempt, we must not forget how necessary they were as a corrective at the time. Handel flourished in England during the era when Swift, Sterne and Smollett were writing their breezy obscenities, and when reverence even for sacred things was an almost negligible quantity. Although religion was preached and formed part of the national life, it was certainly not co-ordinated with spirituality. The sporting *bon vivant* type of parson was not only tolerated, but afforded by his actions no perceptible discrepancy between religion and worldliness. Thus both Swift and Sterne were in orders, but that did not prevent them from being "licentious, coarse-minded men," as their Victorian biographers described them, nor, in spite of, or perhaps because of, their coarseness, from acquiring great literary fame. But what a change was to come over the whole aspect of things, clerical and otherwise ! The *bon vivant* type of parson died

out, and in the course of time was supplanted by one who was so imbued with the reverential attitude that he introduced the "deep note" into the most trivial conversation, and spoke, moved and behaved as if he were officiating at the altar instead of at a tea-party. There was also a noticeable difference in the behaviour of people in church and in their attitude towards their clergy. Whereas it had been quite customary to go to sleep in order somehow to pass the time during Divine service, it came to be considered irreverent, and, therefore, not "good form." As to the parson, he was no longer merely regarded as a "good fellow" paid to preach sermons and keep an eye on the souls of his flock, but was looked up to and venerated as a superior being; in the eighteenth century he may have been, and no doubt often *was*, loved by his congregation, in the nineteenth century he was *revered* by them. And they were as unconscious of the fact that the typical Victorian clergyman was a prig as their grandfathers had been unconscious of the fact that the parson of *their* day was a religious anomaly, and as Handel himself, when he wrote it, was unconscious that his music would ever engender priggishness. Although it is related of him that he composed some of his arias with the tears running down his cheeks, it is also related of him that he was addicted to swearing upon most occasions, that he was a practical and shrewd man of business, enjoyed good food, aristocratic society, and was distinctly ambitious—in short, he was *not* a prig. The irony, however, that he should unwittingly and eventually induce this attribute in others, is only surpassed by an even greater one for which the influence of his music was in no small measure responsible. We allude to the veto set by many clergymen and laymen upon oratorio itself, the grounds being that it was *irreverent*. "It is well known," said Dean Ramsay, who opposed this strange notion, "that objections have been made to the performance of oratorios and the

attendance on such performances. Indeed, they have been considered in some sort profane or sacrilegious ; and well-meaning, conscientious persons have felt it their duty to protest against oratorios, forbidding their families to attend on such performances, as they would forbid their attendance on scenes of mere earthly gaiety, on the opera, and on theatrical entertainments."

It may seem extravagant to speak of reverence run riot, yet not only does the foregoing warrant that phrase, but much else in the Victorian age warrants it also. Now reverence and the idea of sacredness are, of course, very closely allied, but it so happens that an exaggerated idea of sacredness gives rise to an equally exaggerated idea of *unsacredness* : it is this latter idea which caused many of the Victorians to regard all worldly pleasures, so-called, as sinful. The theatre, the opera, were regarded as unsacred—therefore, to derive enjoyment from them was "to indulge in an enthusiasm which leads astray, which leads to the tasting of a pleasure which is of the forbidden tree. . . ." as one might paraphrase the article in the *Quarterly Review* already quoted. Nor can we fail to trace the same cause at the back of all prudery, especially in matters of sex : prudery being nothing more than the result of a perverted sense of reverence. When, for example, a nun is averse from disrobing herself entirely even for the purpose of taking a bath, it is because she imagines that nudity is "a thing unholy in the sight of the Lord." As, however, in the nature of things she cannot get rid of her body, she can at least keep it hidden—that is the extraordinary notion she harbours. And it was a similar notion which the Victorians held in connection with matters of sex ; they regarded sexuality as something so unsacred that they robed it in "black silence," as the nun robes her body in a black garment before she performs her ablutions. Though sex was a necessary if enjoyable evil, it was, they imagined, not officially countenanced by God,

and hence all reference to it in print and in mixed society was prohibited. Ideas associated with "respect for the ladies"—another phase of reverence—also played a part, for it was as "ungentlemanly" for a man to discuss matters of sex with a married woman, even though her innocence could hardly be jeopardised thereby, as it was for him to discuss them with an unmarried one. The concomitants and variants of all this are well known ; the Bowdlerisation of the classics became a popular device, though no one thought of Bowdlerising the Bible ; classical statuary was fitted with fig-leaves ; synonyms were employed to veil the supposed impropriety of certain words ; sudden excursions into Latin were customary in scientific books ; it is unnecessary to elaborate further.

But even turning from the more delicate relations of life to the more practical, we find again how many of them were associated with reverence in the broadest sense of the word. When women considered that certain occupations and certain pastimes were *infra dig.*, it was because they exaggeratedly revered themselves and their own sex, while the opposite sex aided and abetted them in this. All concern on the part of people for their own dignity or that of others, is always inspired by this sense of reverence. Indeed, only in an age when it so forcibly predominated would it have been possible for even a queen to say to her minister who was practically dying : " I am sorry I cannot ask you to sit down. . . . "

There was yet another by-product of reverence, or the sense of sacredness conjoined with dignity, which was a most marked characteristic of the Victorian outlook ; it was the glorification of duty as an incentive to action. To do this, that or the other for its own sake, or because one wished to do it, was not sufficient ; such reasons, in fact, were far too frivolous, too undignified to be countenanced ; but if actions could somehow be exalted by a nimbus of moral obligation, thus denuding them of every

vestige of association with pleasure, then the Victorian's mind was at peace, and his self-respect gratified. Thus arose the idea of the sacredness of Duty.

With all his gifts, Handel was not a revolutionist like Wagner—he was more of the Tschaikowsky type of composer who elaborated the existing musical devices of his day and combined them with a wealth of melodic exuberance. In the case of Tschaikowsky those devices or conventions were connected with the sonata-form, in the case of Handel they were connected with fugal writing, and, as already said, with sequences and reiterations, *i.e.*, conventions in themselves. Why these latter, by the law of correspondences, should have induced formalism in life, we need not repeat. Yet the law of correspondences does not end here ; just because, owing to his technique, Handel's beauty and grandeur were formal and unsubtle, so were the beauty and grandeur of the Victorian epoch . . . with its false gothic architecture, its massive mahogany furniture in the dining-room, its enormous walnut or mahogany beds and wardrobes in the bedroom, its red plush chairs with gilt frames in the drawing-room, its wax flowers and gaudy-feathered stuffed birds under glass cases, its Crystal Palace, its Albert Memorial, and many other objects depictive of formalism too numerous to mention. Yet all this was only one aspect of the Handelian influence—the other and earlier one was manifested in a predilection for the sombre, for black horsehair sofas and chairs, for exaggerated widows' weeds. And why ? Because in certain temperaments the awe and reverence engendered by Handel's music inspired the love of the funereal, the hyper-serious ; in fact, a false idea of the spiritual.

A measure of Handel's glory had spread, soon after his death, to Germany, but not so to Austria, and still less to France. Indeed, as Romain Rolland writes : " We " (of France) " still await the full revelation of this great

luminous tragic art, so akin to the aims of ancient Greece.”¹ And how significant is this admission. In the eighteenth century the English were temperamentally in several respects closer akin to the French than they have ever been since ; after the advent of Handel they became widely divergent. It was quite customary for the Victorians to deplore the frivolity, the outspokenness, the moral laxity, the worldliness, the Sabbath-breaking habits of “ those people on the continent,” quite forgetting that not so many years back similar conditions had obtained in England. It is true that Germany was also included in this sweeping opprobrium, because its theatres and some of its shops were open on Sundays ; yet the habits of the German people, far from being frivolous, were very much the opposite. They were pre-eminently a serious nation who loved serious literature, serious art and serious music : they were also a conventional people. These national traits were partly due to Handel, but even more to the influence of Johann Sebastian Bach, as we shall show in the next chapter. With regard to the Austrians, they retained the national gaiety and *joie de vivre* which are also characteristic of the French ; and it is an interesting fact that they derived much of their musical nourishment from Mozart, whom even to-day they worship almost as a demi-god. This does not imply, however, that the works of Handel were and are never performed in Austria, but that the Austrians were late to recognise his genius, and that in their country he does not occupy, and never *has* occupied the place of glory allotted to him in England. In Italy also he has by no means become a national institution, and here, despite so much professional religiosity, there is, in consequence, very little reverence. This fact was noticeable to no less a person than Mendelssohn who wrote in 1830 : “ The Italians have a religion, but do not believe in it ; they have a Pope and a government,

¹ See “ Handel,” by Romain Rolland. Dr. A. E. Hull’s translation.

but they turn them into ridicule ; they can recall a brilliant and heroic past, but they do not value it. . . . It is really quite revolting to see their unconcern about the death of the Pope, and their unseemly merriment during the ceremonies. I myself saw the corpse lying in state, and the priests standing round incessantly whispering and laughing."

But then a nation with such a passion for the ultra-melodious¹ will always be too gay-hearted to be reverent—it cannot be otherwise.

¹ See Chapter XX.

CHAPTER III

COMPARISON BETWEEN THE INFLUENCE OF HANDEL AND BACH

WITH the death of Johann Sebastian Bach in 1750—just nine years before that of Handel—the greatest polyphonist the world has ever known passed out of the musical arena. Indeed, to him, as Schumann wrote, “music owes almost as great a debt as a religion owes to its founder.” Yet Bach was more than the greatest of polyphonists : he was an inventor of rare melodic beauty and a harmonist of remarkable daring. It is therefore small wonder that he has been termed “the father of the whole of our modern music,” and that his name is the symbol of “the completion and perfection of Christian tonal art during the Middle Ages and the Reformation.” He is even credited with the entire enfranchisement of music, for by his creativeness in the field of purely instrumental composition “the final, full and complete impress of liberty was for ever set to the tonal art. . . . Now could it give utterance in precise, intelligible tones to the innermost feelings. . . . No longer did it require the support of poetry, biblical or liturgical texts, church services, civic ceremonies, or dramatic representation to assist it in making itself understood. It was supreme in its own realm of independent tone, sole sovereign in its world of instrumental music. From a dependent vassal Bach elevated it into the proud position of a queen, responsible to herself alone.”¹

Such are the eulogistic rhapsodies of the historian we

¹ Naumann, “History of Music.”

shall several times quote in this book. The writer in Grove's "Dictionary" expresses himself in an equally eulogistic if less flowery manner. "Bach," he maintains, "created an entirely new vocal style based on instrumental principles, carried it to the summit of perfection, and there left it. . . . Though his masterly counterpoint is generally spoken of as the special mark of his genius . . . his real power lies less in the almost inconceivable facility and dexterity with which he manages the complicated network of parts, than in that formal conformation of the movements which resulted from the manner of writing ; in this he exhibits a consistency, fertility and feeling for organic completeness which are truly inimitable. His melody, his harmony and his periods all seem of one mould, *an indestructible spirit of severe logic and unalterable conformity to law pervades the whole as well as the parts.*¹ These formal principles are governed, pervaded and animated from first to last by the idea of musical composition, so that the materials, though in themselves void of expression, become imbued with an inexhaustible *depth of meaning* and produce infinite varieties of form. This wonderful unity of idea and formal construction gives the stamp of the true work of art to Bach's compositions, and explains the magical attraction which they exert on those who make them their earnest study."

The above requires but little elucidation ; it shows us that the keynote of Bach's genius was *profundity*, yet not an arid profundity, dull, unattractive, fit only for the entertainment of technicians, but one replete with high inspiration and inventiveness. Bach, in fact, was not merely a composer, he was, in one sense, also a mathematician ; only the latter could have brought counterpoint to such a state of perfection. Somewhat similar to a chess-player, he had an extraordinary aptitude for thinking out combinations, and although through his consummate skill

¹ The italics are our own.

he never allowed the workmanship to become undesirably apparent, painstaking must have been a pronounced feature of his *modus operandi*. It would be difficult to imagine that Bach could “dash off” a whole oratorio in three weeks, as Handel is said to have done; for Bach’s “general predilection for dissonance, crossing of parts and suspensions” naturally led to a more complicated style of writing, and one which demanded considerable mental effort. Whereas “Handel is somewhat lax and easy-going in his treatment of art forms, Bach is always strict and pointed,”¹ with the result that less intelligence is required to grasp the former’s compositions than those of the latter,² less intellect—considerably so—was also required in the writing of them.

But to examine the effects of Bach’s music. As will be evident to all those who have obtained some insight into the principal argument of this book, they exercised a most marked influence upon the *mentality*, and hence upon the intellect. The mathematical ingenuity of his fugue-writing alone contributed greatly to this influence. It also with its “imitations” and *stretto* effects made possible an easier “give and take” in the realm of the mental³; or, better phrased, facilitated the exchange and assimilation of ideas: for what else constitutes a fugue but the exchange of one or more *musical* ideas between moving parts? From the day when Bach’s music spread abroad date the vastly increased intellectuality of the German people and the endeavours of some of their greatest thinkers: his music was likewise responsible for the rich harvest of subsequent German composers. The reason why Germany and not England was so prolific in this respect is to be found in Bach’s influence in contradistinction to that of Handel. However necessary and

¹ Naumann.

² *Ibid.*

³ See effects of *Canon*, Chapter XXVII., p. 202.

beneficial in many ways the effects of Handel's work may have been, they were hostile to original thinking and to the production of *creative* musicians ; and it is owing to this that after Purcell,¹ England entered upon the most colourless period of its musical history. Because Handel among other things indirectly inspired conventionalism, the English composers after his time were conventional and mediocre ; they entertained too much reverence for tradition, and hence were imitators, not creators ; only when his influence abated and was counteracted by others did English music once more revive.

But this does not imply that Bach's music inspired no reverence, for the contrary is the truth ; but it was a different type of reverence : a more mental, a more reasoning, and consequently a less purely emotional type. The *Ehrfurcht* of the Germans is directed towards the achievements of great men, towards profound art, towards the grandeur of nature—it manifests itself in a different form from that which we have studied in connection with England ; it is more philosophical and less religiously conventional. Indeed, Bach with his musical logic aroused a remarkable taste for philosophy in the Teutonic people. Even some thirty years ago when his influence had already been much mingled with that of others, while the youths and men of England preferred to gossip about cricket, football or golf, the German youths were earnestly pre-occupied with the " why, whence and whither " of human existence. Although, as we have indicated in our last chapter, the nineteenth century in England was a pre-eminently serious one, that seriousness was more puritanical than intellectual ; there was even a degree of unconscious hypocrisy in many of its features. Pietistic books, for instance, were disseminated in place of literature of high artistic worth, and even the daring and unorthodox George Eliot could not refrain from liberally tincturing

¹ See Chapter XXX., p. 225.

her novels with what Nietzsche caustically terms "moralic acid"—hence a large proportion of her fame. Nevertheless, because she lived with a man who was not her husband, it was considered "shocking" to read her works; and many are the instances of people who slipped them under a cushion when surprised by the appearance of a visitor. . . .

The seriousness of the English, then, and the seriousness of the Germans were widely divergent; that of the former was superficial, that of the latter inherent; moreover, the one was ephemeral, the other enduring. In Germany, books, plays and music of true intellectual and artistic merit were popular in the nineteenth century, and have remained popular ever since; but the plays—so often representative of national taste—which found favour with the English public as late as the 'nineties, if not later, were usually of a deplorable type.

We have examined the general effects of Bach's monumental genius, and we may now turn to those connected with his smaller and less profound works. Although the elements which went to the making of these were slightly less sequential and repetitious than those employed by Handel, they tended to produce a certain amount of formal thinking. In some minds this was distinctly beneficial, for it brought about law and order in the mentality, but in others it tended to produce "strait-lacedness," a quality which was greatly augmented when they came under the influence of Handel. The net result of this may be seen in a species of intellectual conventionality, a ponderousness for which the Germans at one time were notorious. Co-existent with this ponderousness there were signs of another type of conventionality, that which is best summed up in the one expressive adjective, *kleinstädtisch*.¹ It was a characteristic of nineteenth-century German life which more than any other resembled

¹ "Small-townish." Inadequately rendered "provincial."

Victorianism, and it was in some measure due to a very curious fact connected with the post-mortem fame of Bach himself. For exactly one hundred years his more profound and harmonically inventive works were laid aside, and in the interim, or, rather a part of it, those of Handel took precedence in Germany and shed their influence upon the German people. Had Bach's greater works, such as St. Matthew's Passion and St. John's Passion held full sway from the time of their production, the nineteenth century in the Fatherland would have been less *kleinstädtisch* than it was. And this, owing to the dissonances which were prominent factors in both these works. For dissonance has a marked effect on the mental organism, as we will explain in a subsequent chapter ; it renders it more flexible, and so makes the thinker less conventionally-minded. But in consequence of the temporary withdrawal of Bach's more discordant influences and the predominance of Handel's, not only did the *kleinstädtisch* element thrive, but there also came into being that extraordinary genus of people, termed *Kulturphilister*.¹ Bach had first intellectualised the Germans, then Handel appeared and conventionalised them, and the *Kulturphilister* were one of the curious by-products of the composite music. They cannot quite accurately be termed intellectual snobs—though there is a flavour of snobbishness about some of them—they are mainly people whose philistinism is connected with things intellectual instead of things crude and inartistic. They became notorious just previous to and during the War, and were responsible for the adulation of German Culture, about which so much was heard in 1914. Their tenets, in fact, were exploited for political reasons, as the tenets of Puritanism were thus exploited in England before and during the Commonwealth.

We have pointed out that Bach's larger works were

¹ Culture-philistines.

laid aside for a hundred years, and it is known to most music-lovers that to Mendelssohn we owe their resuscitation in 1829, when the Matthew Passion was re-performed in Berlin. After this event "a powerful excitement seized the musical world ; (in Germany) people began to feel that an infinite depth and fulness of originality united with a consummate power of formal construction was lying hidden in these neglected works. Performances of the Passion and of other vocal music of Bach took place in Berlin and elsewhere,"¹ in fact, his music was diffused all over the Fatherland. But although its intellectualising influence—which even now is still operative—was thus diffused, it was, and is, mingled with so many other influences that it is difficult to gauge the exact nature and extent of its effect. Suffice it to say that intellectuality in Germany is more general than in almost any other European country, and that its conventions and intellectual philistinism are fast disappearing. True, there may be those in England whose national pride impels them to object to being considered less "brainy" than their recent enemies ; but we are in a position to show that the musical cause of their objections is not far to seek. Although some of Bach's smaller works gained a hearing—notably the organ fugues—around 1840, the Matthew Passion, in its entirety, was not performed in England till 1854, just 125 years after its original production in Germany. Thus the field of oratorio was held almost entirely by Handel until 1846, when Mendelssohn presented his *Elijah* to the English public. Had Johann Sebastian Bach appeared earlier on the scene, with the full array of his very daring² harmonies and his masterly counterpoint, we emphatically believe that the characteristics of the Victorian era would have been, if not entirely different, at any rate greatly modified. Intellectual

¹ Grove's " Dictionary of Music and Musicians."

² Daring for the period in which they were written.

rather than merely pietistic seriousness would have been more general ; religion would not have become so stereotyped, for people would have thought along more independent lines instead of being content to imitate the thoughts of others. As it was, Handel's "simple grandeur," his completely euphonious harmonies, were not of a nature calculated either to increase the mentality or to modify its conventional tendencies ; this was left for Bach and other musicians to accomplish at a much later date.

For assuredly the English are becoming both more intellectual and less conventional in a large number of ways ; mentality is speedily developing in the labouring classes ; religious thought is becoming more philosophical and scientific, and, as every one knows, there has been a demand for the modernising of the prayer-book. Even fiction during the past years, instead of being merely entertaining, has grown more and more problematical and psychological.¹ Medical science is also becoming broader, and physicians are in process of nearing the conclusion that drugs are not the sole therapeutical agents. Nor can we fail to perceive a change in morals ; they are no longer subservient to hard and fast rules ; people are at any rate to a certain degree permitted to judge for themselves what is right and wrong in given circumstances. In fine, wherever we look, we see the intellect on the ascendant and conventionality—which is but a form of brainlessness—on the decline. It is to the genius of Bach that we owe a certain proportion of all these changes : to Bach who never *has* grown, and, we think, never *will* grow antiquated, because he, more than any other composer, endeavoured to synchronise science, intellectuality and art.

¹ This only refers to fiction of the more serious type, for the market is at present flooded with sensational novels and "crook stories." See Chapter XX., *Jazz*.

CHAPTER IV

BEETHOVEN, SYMPATHY AND PSYCHO-ANALYSIS

JUST twenty years after Bach—modest, indigent, yet content with the obscure position he occupied—had passed away, a soul of a very different nature made its appearance in the little town of Bonn on the Rhine. It already speaks for the vagaries of his character—we allude to Ludwig van Beethoven—that he firmly believed he was born two years later than he actually *was*. Moreover, he could not be convinced when confronted, in the prime of life, with a copy of his certificate of baptism. “This seems not correct,” he wrote on the back of it, “there was a Ludwig before me.” Precisely, but it was a female child named Ludwig Maria ; and even then she was born not two but three years prior to Beethoven.

Yet, considering the particular work for which he was destined, it is, if anything, strange that his temperament which has intrigued so many music-lovers, should not have exhibited even greater peculiarities. We write *intrigued*, but it has done more ; in the mentality of careless thinkers it has given rise to the erroneous supposition that all great tone-poets are erratic, unreliable creatures, with boorish manners and other concomitants of what they are indulgently pleased to term the eccentricity of genius. But these persons have transformed the exception into the rule ; they have also forgotten that if one or two other eminent composers have likewise behaved in a manner inconsistent with good breeding, it is not because they were geniuses, but because, if a

snobbish word be pardoned, they were not "gentlemen." That Beethoven was born of quite humble parents, and therefore in his childhood and youth did not reap the advantages of a refined environment, is evident. True, the prefix *van* has led some people to suppose that he was of aristocratic descent, but in Dutch that word is not a sign of nobility, and must not be confounded with the French *de* or the German *von*. Beethoven was descended from the aristocracy neither on his father's nor his mother's side ; the latter was the daughter of a *chef*, the former, a man of irascible temper and irregular habits, was a vocalist in the chapel of Clement Augustus, the Elector of Cologne. It is more than probable that the son may have inherited some of the father's temper, but, on the other hand, he must also have inherited many of the qualities of his mother, who is described as a woman of soft heart and easy ways, inspiring much love in her afterwards-to-be-famous son. Indeed, it is just this strange admixture of the intensely lovable and the hot-tempered, tactless and ill-mannered in Beethoven's character which has proved so puzzling to benevolent biographers and so disappointing to numerous hero-worshippers.

Yet there are deeper reasons underlying all these characteristics—deeper than the impress of humble breeding, deeper even than the results of those syphilitic affections¹ which manifested themselves at an early period of his life. *If Beethoven's character had been otherwise*, it is not conceivable that he could have discharged his singular mission, *which was to portray in sound every human emotion from the lowest to its very antithesis*. As Bach had been the greatest polyphonist hitherto known, Beethoven was the greatest musical psychologist. For this reason it was essential that he should be born to suffer, born with manifold difficulties against which to

¹ See Grove's " Dictionary."

contend ; difficulties of temperament, of external circumstances, and corporeal difficulties. In order to express the entire gamut of human emotions in the cipher of music, he had first to experience if not all, at any rate most of them ; the rest was achieved through the imagination. But that very imagination set his emotional organism in a whirl of conflicting forces ; it resembled the body of a medium who allows herself to be controlled by every variety of spirit. Small wonder that his mind has been compared to his own journal—a medley “ of the most passionate and personal reflections, prayers, aspirations, complaints, memoranda of expenses and household matters, notes about his music, rules for conduct, quotations from books,” ¹ and what not.

We have sought to explain the connection between the life and character of this remarkable man, and his equally remarkable mission—yet even so, we have only described that mission in part, and have not dealt with its full significance. For it may be asked : “ What is the value of portraying every species of human emotion, especially the lower ones, in musical cipher—is this not merely to degrade music, to render material the most immaterial of all the arts ? ” And the question is a perfectly legitimate one, and may even, in some cases, voice that rather enigmatical dislike which a number of people at the present time feel towards Beethoven’s work. The value of a thing must, however, to a large extent be judged by its effects, as we need hardly point out, and it is with these we are concerned in this book, and not with questions of artistic dogma.

The influence of Beethoven’s music, then, may be placed under two headings : (1) it induced Sympathy on a scale hitherto unknown ; (2) it made possible the introduction of the science of Psycho-analysis to a baffled

¹ Grove’s “ Dictionary.”

and horrified public ; it was, in fact, the forerunner of this therapeutical science.

To deal firstly with the sympathy-inducing aspect of Beethoven's work. The depictive value of music over and above that of literature, drama, painting and poetry, consists in its total lack of restrictedness, and in its direct appeal to the intuition or the subconscious. People intuitively or subconsciously assimilate the meaning of music without—though there are countless exceptions—being objectively aware of the fact. Although literature, drama and the plastic arts can express a vast variety of human emotions, there is, owing to the impure conceptions and prudishness of mankind, a large variety which they are not *permitted* to express, even if they could. As long as humans divide the aspects of nature into two categories—those which are pure, beautiful, etc., and those which are impure, coarse, and so forth—all the arts, *excepting music*, will remain limited in expression. Thus the great advantage of tone-poetry is that it can express *anything* and *everything* in a cipher which the heart understands without the interference of the conscious mind. As most people must realise, it is, with literature, the word that shocks and the mind that is shocked ; and the tendency being to turn from all that is “ unpleasant,” luxurious humanity, in accordance with the old adage relative to ignorance, wisdom and bliss, closes the shutters upon vast fields of knowledge. But that is the very procedure which is utterly hostile to the development of true sympathy ; for hackneyed as the phrase may be, it is none the less a fact that only when we understand all can we forgive all. It therefore became necessary that a medium of expression should be given to the world¹ which compelled people to acquire that understanding, whether they wished to do so or not. This medium was Beethoven's music, for it caused them to realise not only

¹ See Chapter XII., Musicians and the Higher Powers.

the more obvious troubles of others, grief, deprivation, sickness, yearning, but also—in themselves as well as in others—that vast array of strange emotions, feelings, passions, of which men were too ashamed to speak. It was, no doubt, an instinctive recognition of this compelling force in Beethoven's message which caused one of his symphonies to be termed "*ein sittenverderbendes Werk*."¹

In our review of the Victorian era and its characteristics, no mention was made of sympathy. The truth is, that although there were philanthropists—when have there not been?—the power to feel *with* and not merely to feel *for*, was lacking. An excess of reverence and especially of conventionality proved hostile to this "gentle art," and, consequently, we find that so many pious people in that era were, despite their creed, surprisingly intolerant and unsympathetic. They were so concerned with their feelings towards God that they had little or nothing left over for their fellow-man. Such sympathy as did exist was regulated by convention as much as conduct, thought and habit, were so regulated. There were some things about which it was considered wrong to feel sympathetic; a woman, for example, who "went astray," no matter how much she suffered in consequence, was emphatically no fit subject for compassion. And of course, this attitude seems all the more singular in an age which was so pre-occupied with the Bible. That Christ had preached love, sympathy and forgiveness above all other virtues, that He had unequivocally stated that the harlot was nearer to heaven than the Pharisee, seems quite to have escaped His Victorian devotees.

We have reminded the reader that the power to feel *with* is what constitutes the real sympathy, and this

¹ Grove has translated this "a dangerously immoral composition," there being no exact equivalent in English. It means, however, even more: "A work which spells ruin to morals."

because it is based on understanding, the capacity to realise the sufferer's point of view. As long as understanding is lacking, there can be little amelioration of suffering on a large scale. The physician who merely felt sorry for his patient would be quite impotent to cure him ; it is knowledge of what his symptoms portend that makes cure possible—in other words, the physician *understands*, therefore he knows how to set about the cure. But just as there are diseases of the body, so are there diseases of the soul ; the undiscerning physician attempts to cure the former by poisons, and usually only succeeds in suppressing them, the legislator attempts to cure the latter by punishment, and likewise only suppresses them, for the simple reason that the law is an automaton and does not understand the criminal.

Nevertheless, since the advent of Beethoven, many changes have taken and *are* taking place. People are at last beginning to realise that it is better to try and *reform* the criminal than to punish him ; by portraying *every* human passion, Beethoven has made it possible to feel *with* the criminal, to gain an insight into his consciousness, to understand something of his motives—the result being a more humane treatment of convicts. Music and other educative influences are permitted in the prisons, books have been written contending that criminality is a form of insanity and not merely the lust to do evil, and capital punishment is engendering more and more opponents. Again, in the realm of morals, changes are taking place as we pointed out in our last chapter. Close friendships between members of opposite sexes no longer provoke scandals ; chaperonage, to a very large extent, has been abolished ; a girl may bring a man friend to a dance, and dance with him the whole evening without ruining her reputation. The attitude of children towards their parents is no longer one of mere dutifulness and exaggerated respect—yet another phase of Victorian awe and

reverence—but is one more closely resembling friendship and mutual understanding. Furthermore, it was the humanising effect of Beethoven's music which inspired the writings of Havelock Ellis, Forel, Krafft-Ebbing, Bloch and others—those painstaking and self-sacrificing investigators of the much-condemned subject of sexual psychology. As the alienist attempted to show that the misdeeds of the criminal were not actuated by the lust to do evil, so did these writers attempt to show that the misdemeanours of sexual inverts and perverts were not actuated by sheer love of vice. And if we turn to religion, we find that whereas in the early and mid-Victorian epoch, although the New Testament was read and preached, the *spirit* of its teaching was largely ignored, while that of the *Old Testament* was obeyed—for it was really the cruel jealous Jehovah who held sway over Victorian religious thought, and not the benign forgiving Christ. But for some time the Old Testament has been falling into the background, and the Gospels have taken the more prominent place. Moreover, the cruel doctrine of hell-fire with which Victorian nurses and others used to terrorise their charges has now become an unpopular belief, since people, having become more humane themselves, realise that it is inconsistent with the doctrine of Divine Love.

In fine, Beethoven's music has helped to bring about that greater unity between the heart and the mind which is the pre-requisite of true understanding: it has humanised humanity.

Our attention has hitherto been engaged with some of the less palpable effects of Beethoven's genius, and we have made no mention of a more obvious one—the vast increase of charitable organisations, having sympathy as their *raison d'être*. In London alone, no less than 813 charitable institutions were founded during the nineteenth century. To enumerate some of the best-known: the

year 1844 saw the foundation of the Young Men's Christian Association; in 1849, 1854 and 1876, acts were passed protecting domestic animals from cruelty; between 1882-1886 the Church Army, Dr. Barnardo's Homes and the National Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Children were inaugurated; in 1893 a royal commission was appointed to consider the subject of Old-age Pensions. And, in addition to all these organisations, settlements and clubs for the betterment and entertaining of the lower classes have arisen all over this country, and likewise in other countries. It is unnecessary to elaborate further, and we may now pass on to the more specifically psychological aspects of our subject.

Czerny has written relative to Beethoven and his improvisations that "in whatever company he might chance to be, he knew how to produce such an effect upon every hearer, that frequently not an eye remained dry, while many persons would break out into loud sobs; for there was something wonderful in his expression, in addition to the beauty and originality of his ideas . . ." Not that Beethoven himself wished to produce this rather embarrassing effect, since he would often indignantly exclaim: "We artists don't want tears, we want applause." But there existed in his music an element which seemed irresistibly to bring to the surface suppressed emotions that could only find vent in weeping. And although personal magnetism may have enhanced this element to a certain degree, long after Beethoven himself had passed from this earth-plane, people who listened to, but more especially *played* his works, were conscious of a pronounced emotional relief—his music gave utterance to all those feelings which they could not, perhaps even dared not, express in any other way.

It is a well-known fact that to express a sorrow which gnaws at the heart—whether it be to a friend in the shape of a confidence, to a priest before the confessional, or on

paper in the form of verse—is to disburden oneself and so lighten the soul. On the other hand, to repress that sorrow is to endanger both health and sanity. For this reason the wise physician encourages those who have sustained some great shock, or are suffering from some inexplicable fear or desire, to talk about it freely. Now the Victorian age with its prudishness and proprieties, was an age of repressions, and the emotions which ought to have found an outlet were forced *inwards*, with results exceedingly detrimental to the nervous system. This was particularly marked in the case of unmarried women, for not only was it considered *wrong* for them to feel anything in the nature of sex-emotions, but, as strenuous exercise in the form of hockey, tennis and other games was tabooed, no corrective to these emotions was available. It is not surprising, therefore, that the early Victorian women “dissolved into tears,” had “the vapours,” or fainted on the slightest provocation. It must also be remembered that they were considered old and unattractive, hence ineligible, after they had passed their thirtieth year, so that the number of unsatisfied women was very considerable. Indeed, the consequences to the national health would have been disastrous had it not been for Beethoven’s music. When women played his Sonatas, expressive of a host of turbulent emotions, of violent passions and unabashed yearnings, they were actually giving vent to their own feelings, and thus liberating what otherwise would have remained encaged. And it was more than mere sex-passions which they were able to liberate in this way, for Beethoven, being so profound a musical psychologist, expressed those less natural and more reprehensible emotions—hatred, jealousy, and all their variants ; he also expressed intense remorse, despair, and the abyss of gloom. Nor was this all ; by the plummet of his music he fathomed and set free a vast number of emotions which had been forgotten and had sunk into the

subconscious, there to make their ravages upon the health of their generators. It is this searching power in Beethoven's work which prompted us to write that he was the forerunner of psycho-analysis—he *was* in one sense a psycho-analyst, and this is why, as his music became more widely diffused and the Victorian age progressed, its women gradually became less hysterical and less subject to fainting and tearfulness.

There may be some, however, who will question the psycho-analytical power in Beethoven's music ; yet the fact remains that its effect on a large number of people is to induce those tale-telling reveries which reveal the content of the subconscious mind in a manner nothing else *can*. In these reveries may be found mysterious gratification of secret longings ; in imaginary scene after scene, and situation after situation, the dreamers visualise themselves as hero or heroine of their own innermost desire-drama ; natures forced by circumstances into the hypocrisy of repression become, during such moments, their true selves ; unsatisfied cravings, no matter how fantastic, are assuaged ; the frustrations, the thwartings of daily life are forgotten ; impossible-seeming ideals are achieved ; even the god-like instinct to create which slumbers in the heart of every human being may be stirred, just as may old submerged rancours and resentments, and the lust to destroy. The subconscious prisoner is freed alike from the gaolership of social customs, and from that of the conscious mind itself. The action of that conscious mind, indeed, is, in the majority of people, temporarily suspended during the process of listening to music ; it is, in fact, lulled into a species of quiescence, instead of being definitely concentrated upon the sounds played. Those sounds, of course, are heard by the ear, but more than as an actual focussing-point for the conscious attention they serve as a stimulus to set the thoughts wandering and to allow the subconscious—as in the true dream-state—to have full sway.

It is safe to say that a good many types of music tend to produce this "releasing" effect upon the subconscious, but not one to such an extent as that of Beethoven, for he alone among musicians knew how to express just those secrets of the inner mind, and, expressing them, to awaken countless echoes in the minds of his hearers.

So far we have only dealt with the more passionate element in Beethoven's music, and nothing has been said about his extraordinary fund of humour, which plays a very significant rôle in many of his compositions. It is a striking fact that as his deafness became more pronounced, so did his humour; when he realised that his terrible affliction might be incurable, he wrote some of the most hilariously abandoned of all his works. But his humour was not like that of Mendelssohn, sprightly, happy, fairy-like; it was the humour of the gallows; the sardonic laughter of a man who has lost *all*! The first movement of the Seventh Symphony, the last movement of the Eighth, and the Scherzo of the Ninth, are all—especially the latter—examples of this *Galgenhumor*. And this was not manifested alone in his works, but also in his life; it was at this particular period of his career that he developed an embarrassing taste for horse-play in and out of season. That it often caused offence there are many anecdotes to prove, but it often aroused sympathy as well, for it was the jocularly of despair. Before his mission was complete, Beethoven was destined to feel even *this*, that he might portray it in his music, and so make others *understand*. No ordinary humour could have achieved such a result, because ordinary humour does not awaken sympathy, it awakens only laughter; but the humour of the gallows is more poignant even than straightforward pathos, hence it makes a far more powerful appeal. True, there are those who may hear the three movements above-mentioned without being objectively conscious of their real meaning, but the inner being

is affected and understands, and that is all that matters.

When the first monument was erected to Beethoven, the orator on that occasion said : " No mourning wife, no son, no daughter wept at his grave, but a world wept at it." Yet even the " world " did not then understand the complete debt of gratitude they owed to him whose loss they so bitterly mourned. Nor could they understand, for it was another generation which was to reap the full harvest of Beethoven's genius. Those who followed him to his grave had experienced the completest ecstasy through his music, but not its more momentous results. It is the prostitute and the foundling, and the incurable and the very aged—those who have perhaps never even heard his name—who in reality owe him most of all.

CHAPTER V

THE MENDELSSOHNIAN SYMPATHY

THE problem of how much a creative musician's work is affected by his personal character is a hotly debated one ; some people contend that the former is not influenced by the latter, others assert the opposite. Yet, contradictory though they be, there is something to be said for both standpoints, a subject which we shall enlarge upon in due course.¹ Suffice it here to state that whether character and work are to a greater or lesser extent connected depends on the *type* of work—on the particular mission of the composer in question. It is a general rule that when a composer is engaged in depicting the purely human emotions his personal character plays a considerable part, although in some cases appearances may prove misleading. There is the case of Handel, for one : the fact that he inspired awe and reverence did not preclude him from interlarding his conversation with a liberal abundance of swear-words and invocations of the Deity. Yet that a love of reverence lurked somewhere in his nature is evident from his fondness for popularity and the laudation of princes. It is also evident that despite his free language he possessed a due sense of the sacredness of things, and was by no means devoid of religious fervour and devotion. Did he not express the wish to “die on a Good Friday, hoping thus that he might rise again at Easter to meet his Redeemer” ? As for the connection between Beethoven's character and his music, we have expatiated upon

¹ See Chapter XII., Musicians and the Higher Powers.

this in our last chapter, because by so doing we were enabled to obtain a greater insight into the purport of his message. And the same applies to Mendelssohn ; to understand the man is the better to understand the influence of his music, for, with the exception of Chopin, no composer has so palpably expressed his own nature, with all its virtues and limitations.

There could hardly have existed two more diametrically opposed characters than those of Mendelssohn and Beethoven ; and yet strangely enough the two men were, however unconsciously, working to the same end—the instilment of Sympathy into the human soul. But their methods were as opposed as their characters ; Beethoven, metaphorically speaking, showed one side of the picture, Mendelssohn the other—by what means we shall realise when we examine his temperament and career.

It is interesting to observe how widely his life differed from his predecessor's, not only at the beginning, but practically throughout ; how he was to be surrounded by an atmosphere of sympathy from his earliest years. His home circle, in fact, was the very antithesis of Beethoven's ; instead of a drunken father shedding worries and miseries all around him, Mendelssohn's father " was a man of firm character and great general ability ; and though not an artist, was gifted with a far keener insight than most *dilettanti* in the higher qualities of art."¹ Nor was Mendelssohn less fortunate as regards his mother, who, in addition to her capabilities as an excellent but gentle disciplinarian, possessed many and varied accomplishments. " She spoke French, English and Italian fluently, was a good Greek scholar . . . played and sang with taste and judgment, and drew beautifully."² But above all else, she appears, according to Hiller, to have manifested that " infinite kindness and gentleness," that loving interest

¹ " Mendelssohn," by W. S. Rockstro.

² *Ibid.*

in people and their doings, which can be summed up in the one word—sympathy. Of other near relations Mendelssohn had two sisters, one four years his senior, to whom he showed the utmost devotion, and a brother a few years younger than himself. That the whole family was a very united one is evident from all that may be read on the subject, and especially from Mendelssohn's many letters. Thus, in his twenty-first year we find him writing from Italy to his sisters: "I . . . never knew any family, taking into due consideration all defects and failings, who have hitherto lived so happily together as ours." And again: "When every hour makes an indelible impression, and every moment brings with it glad and pleasant sensations, then I ardently wish I were with you, or you with me; and no minute passes without my thinking of one or other of you, to whom I have something particular to say." Moreover, these sentiments were undoubtedly sincere, and not merely prompted by a sense of fraternal dutifulness, for they are in perfect accord with the whole tenor of Mendelssohn's character. "Gifts of genius were in him united to the most careful culture, tenderness of heart to sharpness of understanding, playful facility in everything that he attempted, to powerful energy for the highest tasks. A noble feeling of gratitude penetrated his pure heart at every good thing that fell to his lot. This pious disposition, pious in the best sense of the word, was the secret of his constant readiness to give pleasure and to show active sympathy."¹

We have said that it was necessary for Beethoven's character and that mission which was its outcome, that he should be born into a troublous and uncultured environment; it was as necessary for Mendelssohn's character and mission that he should be born into an environment exactly the reverse. In spite of his good health, he was, so to speak, a delicate sensitive flower which thrived in the

¹ "Mendelssohn," by Dr. Ferdinand Hiller.

warm sunshine of human affection, and was destined to fade as soon as the shadow of adversity darkened its petals. But this only came to pass when he was nearing middle age, and had enjoyed some thirty-five years of happy activity, only to be clouded by two real sorrows—the death of his parents.

That a less sensitive organism could never have been the apostle of sympathy is obvious ; it is not the prize fighter whom we associate with this gentle quality—though he may have a strong vein of it in his nature—but the benign soft-voiced hospital nurse or Sister of Mercy. Though she is cheerful and healthy—how else could she fulfil her duties?—she does not exhibit that aggressive robustness which characterises the pugilist. She may be light-hearted and given to humour, yet it is not of the boisterous horse-play type, but one which enlivens and diverts those who are sick and dejected in spirit. And it was just this combination of elements in Mendelssohn's character, translated into music, which made so direct and instantaneous an appeal. The gentle sweetness of so many of his melodies, combined with the happy but never boisterous elements in his more vivacious passages, could not fail to affect mankind—it brought home to them the beauty of sympathy in itself. No music prior to Mendelssohn's had insistently breathed such exquisite tenderness ; there had been rare moments in Beethoven,¹ but they were fleeting, and all too soon to be swept away by the more violent winds of passion ; but Mendelssohn breathed sweetness throughout, even when gay and vivacious. He had learned to value it from the earliest years of his life, he had seen it in his family circle, and through his music he carried it into those of others. As the works of Alessandro Scarlatti² had been instrumental in bringing religion into the home, so were Mendelssohn's in bringing

¹ In his violin concerto, for example.

² See Chapter XXIX.

tenderness and sympathy. After hearing one of his melodies, people felt soothed and softened, and consequently more benign towards all those in their immediate environment—their wives, their children, their sisters, their brothers. It was impossible to resist the dulcet compassion of such strains as “O Rest in the Lord,” or the melody in the second movement of the violin concerto. Yet this was not all; the aching soul was not only comforted, but cheered by his fairy-like gaiety. Not as with Beethoven’s music were people stirred up into a state of intense emotionality, but lulled into a condition of peace or tranquil felicity. Mendelssohn’s music radiated a serene happiness; he was the musical analogy of Florence Nightingale, not as she really was, but “as facile fancy painted her. . . .” Yet his modesty was such that it seems he was unconscious of his power in his work, even though he experienced that deep sympathy of which it was an expression. For when writing to a friend in distress, he says: “Have I also not felt from the bottom of my heart how at such moments all art and poetry and everything else that is dear and precious to us seem so empty and comfortless, so hateful and paltry, and the only thought that does one any good is ‘Oh, that God would help!’”¹

Still, though he felt thus for the sorrows of his fellows, it was never his mission to portray those sorrows in music as Beethoven had done; it was for him to supply what the former had lacked. Beethoven’s great art was to awaken compassion by, as it were, portraying the wretched and the destitute in all their misery; Mendelssohn’s was to achieve the same result by portraying them made happy; as we have said, he showed the reverse side of the picture. There were many to whom the tragic grandiosities of Beethoven’s works were repellent; they proved

¹ Letter to Ferdinand Hiller.

in those days almost too soul-stirring, and some objected to being thus inconveniently stirred ; they chafed at being made to feel the numberless tragedies of life. To those people the soothing sweetness of Mendelssohn especially appealed, and although they were not objectively aware of it, a sympathy was awakened in the heart which made them desire happiness for their fellows.

As we know, there is a type of emotional epicureanism which prompts some persons only to allow themselves to taste of those feelings which are pleasurable. " I want to hear nothing which is unpleasant," they say, " therefore don't tell me about it." These people are selfish and lacking in sympathy. Yet there are others who, although they dread the spectacle of suffering and go out of their way to avoid it, nevertheless work towards its amelioration ; they wish that every one should be happy, because they see the great desirability of happiness, because by nature they are inherently sympathetic. And it was just this perception of the desirability of a more diffused happiness that Mendelssohn aroused and strengthened by the gayer aspects of his art. Childlike and gay himself, he depicted that conditionless and innocent happiness of children, so enviable to those of maturer years.

There are not a few who detect a certain melancholy in some of Mendelssohn's work, yet if they look closer, they must realise that it is not the melancholy of sorrow, but the rather pleasant melancholy of the poet who now and then enjoys the luxury of feeling sad. In Mendelssohn it was largely inspired by the artistic necessity of contrast. His nature was not such that—like Beethoven—the more wretched, the more agitated he felt, the more did he compose ; under the stress of worry and genuine grief, the delicate flower of his organism withered and lost all its strength. The exigencies of fame—which by the way he never sought—combined with the annoyances of petty jealousies, began to tell upon his health, which was

finally to be shattered beyond repair by the death of the sister he cared for so much.

It was in 1847 that he died, but already a year previously his powers, it would seem, had begun to wane. A child of sympathy who loved the bright and the beautiful, he was no stoic; and with all his admiration for Goethe, whom he had known in his youth, he was not a philosopher. Everything came easy to him except fortitude. . . . Yet perhaps if he had not known how to suffer in excess himself, he would have felt less for the sufferings of others, and could never have tintured his music with that sweetness which was to show the beauty and dulcitude of sympathy itself. Thus the world would have lost the one being who above all else was the tone-poet of compassion, of tenderness and fraternal love.

The immense popularity which Mendelssohn enjoyed, especially in England during his lifetime, was only to be increased after his death. That he enhanced the sympathy-arousing effects of Beethoven's music is obvious from the vast increase of charitable institutions which occurred some twenty years after Mendelssohn had passed away. Between the years 1879 and 1904, no less than fifty-eight were inaugurated in London alone. Sympathy for the blind, for the deaf and dumb, for the dangers and discomforts of maternity, for the illegitimate child, for those suffering from venereal diseases, has been enormously augmented within the last fifty years. And it is not only the welfare of the needy which has been considered, but also that of the ordinary citizen. Apart from the significant fact that the Anti-Sweating League was formed in 1889, public parks, libraries, recreation-grounds, and so forth in astonishing profusion have come into existence. Mendelssohn sowed the first seeds in the heart of man which were to blossom into the exalted ideal of "well-being for all."

CHAPTER VI

FREDERIC CHOPIN, THE APOSTLE OF REFINEMENT

CHOPIN was born not only in the same year as Felix Mendelssohn, but in the same month—February, 1809—and that there was a certain similarity of temperament between the two composers, though their influence on humanity was destined to be different, speaks much for the truths of astrology.

Several biographers have painted the boy Chopin as a “moonstruck, pale, sentimental” creature, with no stamina and no *joie de vivre*; but then biographers, like portrait painters, are not over-incommoded by a sense of accuracy. It was quite enough that Chopin in childhood should burst into tears whenever he heard music, for them to draw these erroneous conclusions, as it was enough that some thirty-eight years later he should desire to be buried in his dress-clothes, for Lombroso to pronounce him a lunatic. Yet, unfortunately for this learned scientist’s diagnosis, Chopin never expressed any such desire, as may be gathered from a perusal of the one comprehensive biography on which it is safe to rely.¹ Nor did he abandon “the woman whom he tenderly loved, because she offered a chair to some one else before giving the same invitation to himself.” For here, as Huneker points out, “we have merely a George Sand story raised to the dignity of a diagnosed symptom.” “It is like the other nonsense,” he contemptuously adds.²

¹ See “Chopin,” by Frederick Niecks, vol. ii., p. 322.

² See “Chopin,” by James Huneker.

The fact is that although there was hardly a thing relative to Chopin about which any two persons could agree, they were at least unanimous that he lived in Paris, where untruthful gossiping—at any rate in the nineteenth century—was reduced to an art, if hardly to a fine one. All the same, from among the tares of pseudo-romantic untruths which sprang up around his enigmatical personality, we are able to glean that as a boy he was neither robust nor very delicate, that he was intelligent, vivacious, sensitive, with a somewhat merry disposition and a fondness for practical jokes. Like Mendelssohn, he was brought up in an atmosphere of “love and refinement,” both his parents being well bred and unusually cultivated. His Polish mother, born of poor but noble stock, appears to have been an ideal mother, his father an agreeable Frenchman with a scholarly turn of mind; as for his sisters, “they were gifted, gentle, and disposed to pet him . . .”¹ Though the Chopin family were never affluent, they lived in easy circumstances, and ample money was forthcoming to pay for Frédéric’s musical education; the supposition, therefore, that he was born to poverty and early suffering is one of those pseudo-romantic fables which have no foundation in fact. There are, however, reasons for supposing that at the age of seventeen he outgrew his strength, having first overtaxed it with his studies at the Lyceum, but the result does not appear to have been very serious, for Karasowski informs us that he reached manhood without ever having suffered from any complaint more alarming than a cold. It is true that his mother and sisters were constantly admonishing him “to wrap up carefully in cold weather,”² and this rather exaggerated solicitude might possess a certain significance, did it not happen to be almost a universal trait in continental mothers and sisters, even when the object of their solici-

¹ See Huneker.

² See Niecks.

tude is comparatively robust. Other evidence set forth to prove that Chopin was a very delicate youth is hardly more convincing. Thus we are told, for one thing, that "he was no friend of long excursions on foot, and preferred to lie down and dream under beautiful trees," and, for another, that he "objected to smoking."¹ But then "poets," as a rule, *are* given to dreaming, and prefer to use their brains rather than their legs; as for smoking, there are countless non-smokers who enjoy excellent health. Even the verdict upon Chopin pronounced in 1830 by the music-lovers of Warsaw when he was twenty-one must be taken *cum grano salis*, namely, that because he looked thin and pale, he would, like so many geniuses, die young: for it is obvious that these romantic pessimists were hypnotised by a facile catch-phrase which was hardly consistent with fact. If they were thinking of *musical* geniuses, then the "so many" were reducible to Mozart and Schubert, seeing that Palestrina, both the Scarlattis, Handel and Bach, all lived to be old men. Nor did Chopin die so very young after all—he was in his fortieth year when he breathed his last, and for Early Victorian conceptions that was middle age.

Nevertheless, we do not seek to prove that Chopin was the embodiment of health and strength, far from it—but merely to dispel the notion that from his cradle to his grave he was a "morose and melancholy invalid" who, despite his disabilities, somehow or other managed to compose. That he was born with a predisposition to pulmonary phthisis which he inherited from his father, is undoubtedly true; but it was not until his twenty-ninth year, when he was subjected to damp and exposure, that it developed. How much the exigencies of Madame George Sand, with whom he was living in Majorca at the time, contributed to the aggravation of his malady, is a matter for conjecture. We only know that despite her

¹ See Niecks.

assumption of innocence she seems to have been unduly preoccupied with matters of sex, and it is difficult in the circumstances to imagine that Chopin was not involved in that preoccupation. Yet even so, in 1839, the doctor "declared that his patient showed no longer any symptoms of pulmonary affection, but was suffering merely from a slight chronic laryngeal affection which, although he did not expect to be able to cure it, need not cause any serious alarm."¹ Subsequent to this we hear very little that is unfavourable about Chopin's health until 1847, after which, with fluctuations, it gradually declined until his death.

We have been at some pains to examine the history of Chopin's physical state in order to dispel several misconceptions which have arisen through an inability to dissociate his work and character from his health. One writer, for instance, says: "Of a delicate constitution, which eminently affected the character of his mind, he was attacked in 1837 by a pulmonary and asthmatic disease, from which he never recovered, that indisposed, if not incapacitated him for appearance in public, and thus concentrated his thoughts upon composition, *while it tinged them with a peculiar, not to say morbid, expression which gives marked individuality to everything he wrote.*"² But the author of this monograph is confounding effect and cause. Firstly, disease can never be the cause of a man's creative individuality, otherwise one would only need to infect the most mediocre *dilettante* with disease-germs in order to transform him into a genius; secondly, Chopin was a highly individual composer long before 1837; thirdly, as we shall attempt to show, his compositions, with few exceptions, were not morbid. Yet this writer is only one out of many who thus describes them, for we find the same charge in Huneke's very interesting and significant study.

¹ Niecks.

² Signed G. A. M. The italics are ours.

“Chopin’s moods,” he writes, “are often morbid, his music often pathological ; Beethoven, too, is morbid, but in his kingdom so vast, so varied, the mood is lost or lightly felt, while in Chopin’s province it looms a maleficent upas-tree, with flowers of evil and its leaves glistening with sensuousness . . . Chopin has surprised the musical malady of the century. He is its chief spokesman.” Huneker then goes on to bracket him with Nietzsche, and tells us they “both suffered mortally from hyperæsthesia, the penalty of all sick genius.” It is true that when a critic speaks of “surprising the musical malady of the century,” we cannot refute his statement, because we do not know what it means, but with the imputation of morbidity it is otherwise. Let us seek to discover upon what it was based.

Chopin was the musical poet *par excellence* of refinement—not a superficial, but an inner refinement of soul ; this refinement, carried perhaps in his personal character to excess, was the character and keynote of his music, and it is this which in certain phases has been mistaken for morbidity. We have spoken of tone-poets in a broad sense, but Chopin was the first tone-poet in the truest and most specific sense ; and for this reason there is in his music at times, and in varying degrees, that aroma of sadness which is the quintessence of all genuine lyric poetry. To understand this fact is to understand the personality of Chopin and the influence he had on the world. This refined expression of sadness and sad expression of refinement, although it could alone emanate from a very sensitive organism, was due to an inherent poeticness of nature, and *not* to a disease of the lungs. And as for that nature itself, it was a blending of French and Polish culture, coloured with a strong vein of patriotism, which did not fail to manifest itself in Chopin’s music. But again in this there was nothing morbid : as many other composers have derived inspiration from the

folk-music of their own nation and translated it into their works, so did Chopin, and inevitably with it some of its sadness—for the Polish folk-song happens to be sad.

And yet even so, the poetic and languid melancholy of Chopin's muse has assumed undue proportions in the minds of his critics. There is a movement, a vigour, a gaiety in the bulk of his finer compositions, which is the very reverse of sad, though, owing to this inner refinement which we have stressed, neither his vigour nor his gaiety ever verges on the "muscular" or the boisterous. However animated, however gay, however passionate even, there is a grace of manner, a poetic restraint not to be found in the works of any antecedent composer, except perhaps his contemporary, Mendelssohn, who most nearly approached him in this respect.

Chopin was not only a poet but a musical aristocrat in the most cultured sense of the word; and every one of his emotions he expressed *as* an aristocrat, in the best chosen language. His music was simply the replica idealised of himself; he hated everything blatant, everything that savoured of the unæsthetic. For the dissipations of the "average sensual man, he had an abiding contempt."¹ Even his aversion to smoking was because it offended his sense of refinement, and it was this same sense which made public performance and applause odious to him.² His musical tastes were no less revolutionary. Save for one or two sonatas, he did not find Beethoven's work altogether sympathetic—the musical personality of a man who, in front of ladies, could pick his teeth with the candle-snuffers,³ could hardly be expected to appeal to his delicate nature. Although he admired Beethoven's genius, many of his compositions seemed to him "too rudely sculptured . . . too athletic . . . too tempestuous,

¹ Huneker.

² See Tarnowski, "Chopin: as revealed by Extracts from his Diary."

³ See Mendelssohn's "Letters from Italy."

their passion too overpowering . . . for his taste.”¹ Nor did Schubert fare much better in his estimation ; “ in spite of the charm which he acknowledged in some of his melodies,” he found him, on the whole, too crude to be pleasant ; for all “ savage wildness,” all unmasked expression of sorrow was repulsive to him. Indeed, in reviewing Chopin’s sympathies, hardly a musician could be instanced with whom they were more exclusive. There were for him but two musical gods—one was Mozart. the other Bach ; and he loved the former because in Liszt’s words “ Mozart condescended more rarely than any other composer to cross the steps which separate refinement from vulgarity.” How illuminating this sentence in connection with Chopin’s character !

Except for attempting to dispel those few misconceptions already mentioned, we have purposely avoided saying anything hitherto unsaid about this illustrious Polish musician ; we have set down nothing relative to his music which has not been written and felt by every writer of discernment. And this is as important in estimating his influence on the world, as it has been in connection with the other composers dealt with in this book. We do not, like Lombroso appears to have done, wish to invent “ facts ” in order to bolster up our contentions. That Chopin was a lunatic, there is no existing document to prove, but that he was “ the poet of the piano,” a “ musical aristocrat,” inevitably struck every unprejudiced person who heard his music. What were the effects of his “ poetry ” and his “ aristocracy ” we shall now proceed to examine.

¹ See Liszt.

CHAPTER VII

CHOPIN, THE PRE-RAPHAELITES AND THE EMANCIPATION OF WOMEN

CHOPIN's music was of the type that had an almost instantaneous effect ; but by this we do not mean that the plenitude of its influence was reached immediately ; at the outset it merely affected the more sensitive organisms, until later on it became generally diffused. In the domain of painting it indirectly inspired the Pre-Raphaelite Brotherhood and Burne-Jones ; in the domain of literature, the stylistic refinements of Flaubert, Rossetti, Paul Verlaine, Maeterlinck and others.

Chopin visited England for the first time in 1837, and by 1843 his works were sufficiently known to prompt the English critic, J. W. Davison, to publish a book on the subject. Some few years later the Pre-Raphaelite Brotherhood was formed.

Into the technical doctrines of that Brotherhood we need not enter ; it is the spirit of their work with which we are concerned, a spirit which is at once the quintessence of refinement, of æstheticism, of poetical minutia. There is in many of the pictures, especially in those of Rossetti—as also of Burne-Jones—that same refined languor, that same delicacy of outline to be found so frequently in Chopin's melodies. Had the latter introduced, instead of Polish dance-music, the archaic flavour of plain-song into his work, the analogy would be complete. As it was, only the Chopinesque spirit came to be imbibed by the above-mentioned painters, the *manner* they adopted from

the early Italian school. So transparent, in fact, must this be to all who have allowed themselves to sense the atmosphere of a Pre-Raphaelite picture, that it seems unnecessary to elaborate further. Suffice it to add that some of the Pre-Raphaelites and their offshoots carried refinement to such lengths that it gave rise to that portrayal of "passionless pallid maidens" and bloodless knights which provoked the "literary wrath" of a Jewish philosopher, and impelled him to maintain that practically all the art and literature of his day was the result of physical and psychical degeneration. Since the advent of Max Nordau, the term *decadence* has been bandied about with a noticeable lack of discrimination.

If we turn from Pre-Raphaelite painting to Pre-Raphaelite literature, in which the names of Rossetti, William Morris and Maeterlinck predominate, in each of these men, despite their predilection for mediævalism, the same spirit of refinement prevails. Whatever the emotion depicted, there is a complete absence of brutality. Some of the mediæval ballads proper, for instance, are intensely brutal—not so the balladistic poetry of Morris or Rossetti, or the romantic dramas of Maeterlinck. The romance of "Aglavaine and Selysette," by the latter, in which a young woman commits suicide so that her betrothed may marry another woman, is intrinsically Chopinesque in its delicacy of treatment. None of the directness of Shakespeare or Beethoven is to be found in this tragedy—and the same applies to every drama Maeterlinck wrote. Over all there is a veil of chaste simplicity, of simple restraint—it is one of the phases of the Chopin spirit carried to its extreme limit.

Nor do we fail to perceive its influence in the poetry of Ernest Dowson and Paul Verlaine; there is that same exquisite refinement in all their works. Although passion is not missing from some of Dowson's lyrics, it is always enshrouded in an atmosphere of roses and violets, of soft-

ness and shadows—"blood and thunder" was as foreign to Dowson as it was to Chopin himself. And then if we consider Flaubert, that novelist who was so tortured by the exigencies of refinement of style that hours would pass while he weighed the appropriateness of one word—stylistic refinement with him had assumed the proportions of a malady.

The influence of Chopin upon manners was as pronounced if not as transparent as his influence upon literature and art. If we revert for a moment to Handel, we will remember that *he* inspired conventionality and propriety. The outward manifestation of his influence is expressible in such phrases as : "Other people don't do it, neither must we," or, more concisely put : "It isn't *done*" Thus as the outcome of Handel's influence anything in the nature of coarseness, for example, was considered *wrong* ; as the outcome of Chopin's influence, it was considered "*not nice*"—the anti-conventional, therefore reprehensible, had become the unæsthetic. But not only had Chopin's music an æstheticising effect, it had also and inevitably a selective one—the *they* became the *we*. No longer was it a question of what other people do or the reverse, it was a question of what *we* do, or the reverse—*we* who are the *élite* and who are separate from the mass. Thus Chopin was at any rate responsible for a step in the right direction—he had altered and refined the motive. That people should refrain from doing a thing because it was unbeautiful was better than that they should merely refrain because it was unconventional.

There was nevertheless an unpleasant side to the picture, for this idea of "*we*, the *élite*," gave rise to a certain snobbishness, and consequently to a pronounced degree of intolerance—it was Chopin's own exclusiveness manifesting itself. In its most aggravated form it produced cliquism ; in its higher form it inspired the inauguration of societies connected with intellectual or artistic

pursuits. Thus we find that in 1854 an Act was passed "to afford facilities for the establishment of institutions for the promotion of literature and science by grants of land, etc., and for their regulation." From that time onward the number of societies devoted to art, music or *belles lettres* and formed in London alone, is particularly striking. Beginning with the Society for the Encouragement of Fine Arts (1858), we may enumerate among others the Early English Texts Society, Chaucer Society, Holbein Society, New Shakespeare Society, Musical Association, Purcell Society, Hellenic Society, Carlyle Society, Wordsworth Society, Browning Society, London Dante Society, Ruskin Society, Shelley Society, Goethe Society, Elizabethan Society, and so on. It will be seen that a special feature of these societies was that most of them were formed around the name of one particular man—a poet or musician ; this, except where religion was concerned, was something new. Hitherto people had been content to read their especially cherished poets at home in solitary pleasure, but after Chopin had diffused his influence, they formed themselves into societies in order, on the one hand, to gain a better understanding of their poetic idols, and on the other, so that they might feel that *they* knew and comprehended them better than "the man in the street"—it was again a question of the *we*—we who are more cultivated than our fellows !

This same tendency was noticeable even in the world of fashion. Some years ago, to give an instance, ladies wore a particular kind of white shoes. One day the author asked an acquaintance why *she* did not wear them ? The answer was illuminating. "Shop girls," she said, "have taken to wearing them ; since then—*we* don't." Indeed, here was another of Chopin's weaknesses spread abroad into society.

At the head of this chapter we have bracketed the name of Chopin with the emancipation of women, but it

should be added that he only started the movement—it was Wagner who completed it, if indeed it be completed as yet. Chopin's influence in this respect was especially appreciable in Germany and England. Neither German nor English women as a general rule were mentally cultured; they were good housewives, they embroidered, they knitted, they crocheted, they were proficient in what was called "deportment," and to a limited extent they played the piano and sang innocuous drawing-room ditties. But even so, these accomplishments were largely inspired by an *arrière pensée*—the desirability of marriage. They were not the *insignia* of an aspiration towards true mind or soul culture, they were merely the essential ingredients which went to the fashioning of an "eligible young woman." Indeed, in the Victorian era a mentally cultured woman was regarded as a conjugal inconvenience—husbands, being none too intellectual themselves, were apprehensive of being allocated to a position of inferiority. Let women be beautiful and "accomplished," but not too intelligent—this was the attitude which obtained some sixty to eighty years ago.

Nevertheless, the influence of Chopin was destined to alter it in a manner of which no other musician was capable. The conventionalising effects of Handel had but augmented it, they only inspired more reverence and awe on the part of women towards their husbands, and consequently towards their wishes and opinions. As most people are aware, there was in the Victorian era seldom any true friendship between husbands and wives. The men feared God, the women feared God *and* their husbands; it therefore became necessary that a subtler influence should be employed to break down this debilitating dependency—that influence, as already said, was Chopin. He affected women—though unbeknown to themselves—through his refinement, his delicacy, his æstheticism. Through that feminine absence of all that

was harsh, rough or grating, his music insinuated itself into their subconscious minds and left its cultural imprint—it was like one tenderly feminine soul speaking to another and gently firing it with nobler aspirations. Alone the music of a man who “never made use of an inelegant word, even in moments of the most entire familiarity . . . whose gaiety . . . was always restrained within the limits of perfect good taste”¹—only the music of such a man could be calculated not to wound the susceptibilities of those delicate Victorian organisms. Beethoven, direct and ruthless, with his psycho-analytical powers had liberated a multitude of repressed passions from the subconscious, but apart from sympathy he had, so to speak, left nothing in their place—his had been an emptying process, to Chopin it was allotted to fill the void. As Beethoven had awakened that sympathy by portraying the tragedies and sordidnesses of life, so did Chopin awaken the desire for culture by portraying the poetry of refinement and the inherent charm of poetry itself. The result was that women who had been perfectly content to stay at home and make antimacassars for the household chairs or carpet-slippers for prospective or present husbands, began to join societies for the better understanding of poetry or the fine arts. It was the beginning of the emancipation of womanhood.

Before we complete this chapter, a word should be added relative to another composer whose influence on culture was very marked—we allude to Georges Bizet. As Chopin was the poet of refinement for the piano, Bizet was the poet of refinement for the orchestra. Born just eleven years before the death of the Polish musician, he carried on the work which the latter had begun, until his own death in 1875. It is safe to say that prior to Bizet no orchestrator had manifested such a consistent sense for instrumental euphony. Berlioz in comparison

¹ Liszt, “Life of Chopin.”

was a bombastic thunderer, and Beethoven, with his unfortunate use of the trumpets, left much to be desired. Even Mendelssohn did not come up to the standard of Bizet—he painted with a heavier brush. But then it would seem that in order to understand the true essence of euphonious sonority, one must needs be born a Frenchman. Bizet, in spite of his predilection for “local colour,” was French through and through—he possessed all the French charm, all the French polish, as the hackneyed phrase goes; like French women, he was *toujours chic*. And yet he could be both tragic and dramatic, as witness at the end of *Carmen* the last agonised cry of Don José—which, by the way, Wagner embodied in the *Liebestod*. Nevertheless, with all his sense of tragedy, Bizet never became heavy nor vulgarly melodramatic. Moreover, he never lost his sense of the beautiful; with him passion and power were seldom if ever portrayed by harshness, they were portrayed by yet another phase of beauty.

CHAPTER VIII

ROBERT SCHUMANN AND THE CHILD-NATURE

IT is a noticeable fact that within the last fifty years a vast change has taken place relative to the education of children. The first signs of this change were already perceptible after 1836, when Froebel opened his Kindergarten school at Blankenberghe. But that the Kindergarten became a popular institution was in part due to the influence of Robert Schumann's music, which began to find favour about that time, while much later on the Montessori system was, we learn, actually inspired by that influence. It crystallised at last the realisation (1) that children are all different from one another, and hence must be treated individually and not *en masse*; (2) that children cannot in reality be educated by any one else, "the impulse to learn must come from within their own minds"; (3) that children are so constituted that "*given proper conditions* they prefer educating themselves to any other occupation."¹ For in these three sentences are clothed the underlying ideas of that system, which is more and more obtaining a hold with those who have the interests of children at heart.

But of course ere it was possible for such a practical measure to be introduced, let alone accepted, a marked alteration in the prevailing attitude towards children was highly essential. During the Victorian epoch not only was the treatment of the young based on a remarkable ignorance of human nature, but on an equally remarkable,

¹ See "The Montessori Manual," by D. C. Fisher.

if unconscious, selfishness. Children were to be "seen and not heard," which meant that they were to afford an ocular pleasure to adults, but were not to inconvenience them by asking questions, still less by romping and making a noise. That Nature, in order to develop their lungs and muscles, requires that children *should* romp and shout, did not sufficiently occur to our Victorian forefathers; nor that they *must* ask questions in order to acquire knowledge. For young people to behave thus was not consistent with that idea of awe and reverence which ought to be observed before elders and betters! But of course children did romp and shout and ask questions nevertheless, because Nature is more powerful than precept—and the result very often was chastisement, justified by the wisdom of Solomon, no allowance being made for Oriental hyperbole. In a word, children were treated after the manner of criminals; they were *punished*, not *reformed*. It was for the influence of Robert Schumann to bring about that deeper love and understanding of the child, which is such a pronounced characteristic of the present age.

A few years ago one frequently heard the expression "a literary painter"—it appeared to denote a man who was as much pre-occupied with the subject he painted as with the painting itself. This expression, if we mistake not, has been applied to Burne-Jones, Rossetti, Böcklin and others, because they combined poetry of subject with beauty of representation. The analogy of this in the realm of the tonal art is to be found in the composer of what is termed programme-music in contradistinction to the composer of *absolute* music—the one aims at expressing an emotion, a scene or an idea, the other is content to "express nothing but music itself"—if such a thing were possible.

Now, although Schumann never actually wrote symphonic poems, his inspiration was more influenced by

literature than that of any composer we have hitherto examined. One may even go so far as to say it was almost entirely nourished on the writings of Jean Paul. So great was his admiration for this author "that he would become violently angry if any one ventured to doubt or criticise Jean Paul's greatness as an imaginative writer."¹ Nor was Schumann's estimation of him unjustified, for interspersed among his interminable novels are to be found, clothed in the form of dreams, the most remarkable and grandiose prose-poems which have ever been evolved; they are cosmic in their grandeur, and Carlyle as well as Schumann was enmeshed in their enthrallment. But then Schumann was a dreamer himself; he was also a poet in embryo; for at one time "his inclinations seem almost to have hung in the balance between music and literature."² As it was, the two became closely intermingled; he not only adopted the avocation of musical *littérateur*, but was the first *literary* composer of whom there is any record.³ With him the title of a piece was, if not an essential adjunct, at any rate an aid to its comprehension. And yet—significant fact—the piece was conceived first and the fitting title afterwards; which goes to show that Schumann, instead of circumscribing his musical inspiration by a literary idea, allowed the former to have full sway—it was, as it were, the voice of music which spoke first, it was that same voice which ultimately conveyed to him its own meaning.

And it is just that meaning, or rather multitude of meanings conveyed through Schumann's vast number of pieces, from which one may gain some idea of the content of his message. That it is not as immediately apparent as that of Handel, Bach or Chopin, must be admitted; but if we approach Schumann's music with a sufficiently

¹ See Grove's "Dictionary."

² See Hadow, "Studies in Modern Music."

³ We here distinguish between *literary* and *operatic*.

unprejudiced mind, *his* message is discernible none the less. In the first place an atmosphere of simplicity and innocence pervades practically the whole of his works, whether he portrays the scenes of childhood or the sentiments of adults. In the second place he entertained a noticeable predilection for simple forms—the song form so-called, the theme and variations, and the song proper. Even his larger dimensional works, quartets and symphonies, are mostly composed of song-form sections ; as for the *Carnaval* and the *Papillons*, they are a series of small pieces placed together under one composite title. It was not that Schumann did not aspire towards the more architectural type of forms in which Beethoven and Mendelssohn had excelled, it was that this inherent *simplicity* always asserted itself, no matter what he wrote. Indeed, since Domenico Scarlatti and the Clavecinists, never had a serious composer written such a prodigious number of small pieces. If we glance through the thirty-four volumes of Schumann's works, we find *Papillons* (twelve pieces), *Davidsbündler* (eighteen pieces), *Kinderszenen* (thirteen pieces), *Bunte Blätter* (fourteen pieces), *Novelletten* (eight pieces), and so on ; only now and then do we stray upon an overture, a sonata or a symphony. And then if we study the titles, there is the same poetic simplicity, as if Schumann were deliberately naming his creations to suit the child-mind. Thus "Scenes of Childhood," "Motley Leaves," "Butterflies," "Fairy-tale Pictures," "Fairy Stories," "Children's Ball," "Album for the Young," "Christmas Album." And again, such significant superscriptions for single pieces as "Why?" "Happiness is Enough," "Soaring," "The Merry Peasant," etc. Moreover, Schumann takes care to explain to his friends the meaning of some of his titles ; he distinguishes the *Kinderszenen*, for instance, from the *Weihnachtsalbum* "on the grounds that the former are the recollections which a grown man retains of his child-

hood, while the latter consists of imaginings and expectations of young people.”¹

Schumann has been termed the Musical Apostle of the Romantic Movement, and the phrase is apt enough—but with him true romance was associated with childhood, not with maturity. Himself a large overgrown child, a dreamer, he portrayed those romantic sentiments which alone exist in the dreamland of children. Who but a big child, fond of fanciful pranks, could have conceived of and enjoyed such a strange creation as the *Davidsbündler*? Here was a purely fictitious brotherhood, half-humorous, half-poetical, which existed solely in the imagination of Schumann himself.² It was but an elaboration of the childish fondness for assuming the characters of others, as when children exclaim: “Let’s pretend to be grown-ups, soldiers,” or what not. And this being so, we cannot fail to see whence Schumann’s idolisation of Jean Paul arose, for the latter “was unsurpassed in depicting the tender emotions with his dazzling and even extravagant play of digressive fancy, his excess of feeling over dramatic power, his incessant alternations between laughter and tears.”³

Yet, withal, Schumann lacked the *power* of Jean Paul’s greatest moments. When Schumann tried to be strong, he usually succeeded alone in portraying the strength of a little boy pretending to be a big one. There was always something intrinsically naïve about these attempts, for if he does manage to invent a bold, clear-cut theme, as the first theme of the B \flat symphony, for example, it invariably after a few bars breaks off into something either playful or pleading. Another childlike element in Schumann is his predilection for telling stories, or, at any rate, “for bringing his hearers into a condition of mind

¹ See Hadow.

² See Grove’s “Dictionary,” Schumann.

³ *Ibid.*

from which they could go on romancing for themselves.”¹ He has also a great fondness for musical jokes, whimsicalities and puzzles : not only did he write six fugues on the name “Bach,” but a whole set of variations on a theme formed from the letters of a young lady’s name. Further instances of this type of playfulness may be found in the “*Carnaval*,” in the “Album for the Young,” and in other works.

In passing at length from causes to effects, we must once again emphasise the fact that music speaks its message direct to the heart—Schumann was, as it were, the messenger from the heart of the child to the heart of the parent. Nay, he was more : he was the true poet of the child-soul, of the child-nature, of the child-life. With his tenderness, his whimsicality and his humour, with his questionings, his fancifulness, his pleadings and his dreaminess, he implanted in the mother-heart the true likeness of the child, and she understood. Children were different from what she had previously thought. Her own childhood, though remembered, had taught her very little, in spite of its multitude of joys and sorrows. She had been corrected and punished, and had arrived at what she now was ; what had been good enough for her when a child, would be good enough for other children. But no—a subtle influence told her otherwise. Children were not all alike, they were as varied as adults ; there was only one similarity between them—that they were all children. It was our treatment of them that made them appear all alike ; we allowed them no self-expression, we trampled upon their individualities, we silenced their questionings, we never tried to understand them, to foster their latent faculties, to discover their latent talents. When they were naughty, we punished and put them to bed, but we never sought to find out the true cause of their naughtiness and wisely to remedy it ; on the

¹ See Hadow.

contrary, we resorted to the expedient of frightening, of the rod, of hell-fire, of the boggy-man. Was there no better way . . . ?

So far we have considered the effect of Schumann's music on adults, but it had, or rather *has*, a marked effect on children themselves ; it helps the child more speedily to reach maturity of mind. There are children born nowadays who astonish their elders by their spasmodic outbursts of wisdom. We often hear the phrase : " One could hardly believe that a child could think of such things ! " This precocity is due to Schumann's influence ; for, owing to the improvement in the conditions of child-life, the latent faculties of the child-soul are brought more readily into manifestation. His music affects the *subconsciousness* of children in a manner in which none hitherto has been capable of affecting it. It is the only music so far conceived which is attuned to the child-mind, and for this reason it is—equally—the only music capable of *educating* the child. Handel, and more especially Bach, were too complicated, Mozart too flowery, and even Mendelssohn and Chopin not simple enough. Yet simplicity alone were insufficient : it must needs be combined with artistic excellence. Such mediocre compositions which, owing to their simplicity, are played to or given to children to play, may be useful for *musically* educative purposes, but they do not educate the *soul*. Only when simplicity and true art are united can this result be achieved. The musical soul of Schumann, so to say, understood the soul of the child, and spoke to it as no other composer *could* speak . . . and he spoke to it with tenderness and love.

Like Chopin, Robert Schumann has exercised a marked effect on the pictorial art ; he was, for one thing, largely responsible for that type which in its first form was known as the *Jugendstil*, the very word *Jugend* meaning the Young. It was in evidence in the final decade of last

century, but since then it has undergone development at the hands of a variety of artists. But even more has Schumann been responsible for moulding the post-impressionist painters. If we examine the spirit of post-impressionism, we must inevitably notice that its outstanding feature is *naïveté*, and the drawings and paintings inspired by its influence look as if they had been executed by *children*—trees, houses, figures, all suggest the hand and mind of a child. This is already noticeable in the works of Gauguin and Van Gogh ; it is even more noticeable in those of Henri Matisse, Picasso, Marchand, André Derain and Augustus John, though the latter cannot accurately be described as a post-impressionist. Nevertheless some of his drawings exhibit this same characteristic of *naïveté*, and the author remembers one in particular which was not only drawn in a childlike manner, but seemed to have been “scribbled all over” by a child. This primitiveness, this simplicity of conception has spread far and wide into all countries ; in Switzerland we notice it in the paintings of Hodler, we notice it in German, French, English, Russian and Italian painters, and we do not hesitate to repeat that it was indirectly inspired by Schumann, as the pre-Raphaelites were indirectly inspired by Chopin. That it took longer to materialise, we admit ; but then Schumann’s music has never been so extensively played as that of Chopin, whole programmes being devoted to the latter’s works. It is true there are other elements to be discerned in many of these exponents of “childlikeness,” some of them, in fact, like John, being also influenced by those musicians who aimed at the “sublimation of ugliness” ; but that does not detract from our argument. There *are* other ways of being sublimely ugly (!) than by imitating the crude *naïveté* of childhood.

CHAPTER IX

WAGNER, SPIRITUALITY AND FREEDOM

IN the year 1855 the Directors of the old Philharmonic Society in London were at some pains to find a new conductor ; Spohr, Sterndale Bennett and Berlioz were not available, while less eminent men were hardly suited to the dignity of such a post. After some deliberation, however, a composer-conductor was transported from Zürich, and on March 12th he reaped "an undoubted triumph" from a highly astonished audience, as well as from the orchestra itself. The Press was also astonished, but its astonishment was of another nature ; "it turned upon this fine-profiled, alert little gentleman" with a unanimity which it very seldom displays, and excited itself almost to hysteria over the "mass of incoherent rubbish which he had the temerity to offer as a contribution to art."¹ One writer informed the public that he was "a desperate charlatan endowed with worldly skill and vigorous purpose enough to persuade a gaping crowd that the nauseous compound he manufactures has some precious inner virtue which they must live and ponder yet ere they perceive . . ." Further that "scarcely the most ordinary ballad writer but would shame him in the creation of melody, and no English harmonist of more than one year's growth could be found sufficiently without ears and understanding to pen such vile things." Another writer appears to have warned his readers that if they listened to the impious theories, the "wily eloquence" of

¹ See Hadow, "Studies in Modern Music."

this new conductor-composer, they would "find themselves in the coils of rattlesnakes," for his compositions were "reckless, wild, extravagant and demagogic cacophony, the symbol of profligate libertinage."¹

Meanwhile Richard Wagner, the individual who provoked these instructive obloquies, continued to conduct the Philharmonic ; he was in his forty-second year. Not so very long afterwards, members of the public paid £5 for a ticket to hear *Tannhäuser*.

But although it is true, as Hadow points out, that Wagner had omitted to call on the critics, there are deeper reasons for this "singular lack of urbanity" on the part of these musical journalists. Those Dark Powers² which work *against* the spiritual evolution of the race, were using every means at their disposal to thwart Wagner and his message—the critics were an easy prey for their endeavours, and they employed them. And we need not search far for the reason : criticism, as practised by journalists, is usually destructive ; and like attracts like.

Wagner's life had been one of continuous struggle ; exiled from Germany on account of revolutionary opinions, he had in Paris, whither he had fled, faced a condition verging on starvation ; nevertheless he had already written seven operas and sketched parts of the eighth and ninth, namely, the *Walküre* and *Siegfried*. In these latter, and in the *Rheingold* which he completed in May, 1854, the true soul of Wagner was made manifest ; the year 1854-55 was therefore the most important in his career—during that momentous twelvemonth he had found the creative principle, the God in Man.

There are beautiful moments in the *Dutchman*, in *Lohengrin* and *Tannhäuser*, yet they are but an earnest of what was to follow ; they are not the genuine Wagner, and, consequently, in our study of his effects on humanity,

¹ See Hadow, "Studies in Modern Music."

² See Chapter XII., "Musicians and the Higher Powers."

these operas will not be included. Unlike Mozart, Chopin and Schumann, Richard Wagner did not reach maturity till middle age. Whereas the first works that Schumann wrote were startlingly individual, those of Wagner showed no discernible individuality at all; his message was too profound to be the product of youth. And what is more, his full influence will not be felt for another 200 years; for although the spirit is ready for that impetus which it was his destiny to give to spiritual progress, not so the mind and flesh. The reason for this will be revealed as we come to understand the aim and end of his genius.

Those who have read Bernard Shaw's ingenious interpretation of the Nibelungen Ring, will, as far as its plot is concerned, have gained some idea of its socialistic meaning, if not of its more transcendental one, though the two are closely interwoven. They will also have realised on fairly sound evidence that Wagner himself was less clear as to his own meaning than was his interpreter. For there is a letter written to his friend Roeckel in which he says that an artist "feels in the presence of his work, if it be true art, that he is confronted by a riddle about which he, too, might have illusions . . ." Again, in another letter: "I believe a true instinct has kept me from too great a definiteness, for it has been borne in on me that an absolute disclosure of the intentions disturbs true insight." And finally: "You must feel that something is being enacted that is not to be expressed in mere words."

All the same, making allowance for some inconsistencies the whole Saga, briefly stated, represents a forceful picture of the disasters which accrue from the lust for power—power being symbolised by gold and the magic ring. The reason why the lust for power must inevitably spell disaster is because of its antagonism to Love, to the Divine Will, to the spiritual evolution of the race. That Wagner represented the Divine Love through the

human love, as typified by "Brunnhilde," was not due to shortsightedness, but partly to dramatic expediency, and also because human love *is* a phase of Divine Love ; the difference is not one of kind, but merely of degree. Now the blissful consciousness of the Divine Love can only be reached through a realisation of the true nature of man and his relation to God. Hitherto, mankind has merely believed in the divinity of *God* : it must henceforth believe in the divinity of *man*, for the two are one. So long as men continue to think of themselves as "miserable sinners," sinners they will remain, and loveless ones ; but when they realise that as God is Love, they likewise are Love, the Truth will set them free, and then of its own accord will come the great renunciation—the renunciation in which there is no *sense* of renunciation at all. This was the lesson which Wagner endeavoured to teach ; he was the apostle of Freedom through a knowledge of the Truth.

And yet, notably in his portrayal of the character of "Wotan," he sounded, as it were, a note of warning. "Wotan," with his intellect, was harassed by two conflicting forces : he saw the desirability of Love, and also the desirability of personal power, and endeavoured to combine the two, with the usual disastrous results. Though a man's intellect may whisper to him that divine philosophies and religions are beautiful and true, unless through the promptings of the heart he ceases to lust after dominion, after riches, after fame, he can never be free ; for freedom and peace of mind, which alone accrue from desirelessness, are synonymous. It should nevertheless be added in parenthesis that it is not money nor power in themselves which are inimical to Freedom, but the *love* thereof, as the Biblical text unequivocally asserts. In other words, it is solely the *attachment* to these things which is evil, and hence we find that all the immortal sages of the world have voiced the one great maxim :

"Learn to be not attached!" Why attachment is hostile to love-consciousness is because the former involves limitation and separateness, whereas the latter implies expansion—it is the encompassing of the All by the One, the experiencing of Unity. But let it be noted that Freedom through Love does not only involve freedom for self, but freedom for all; it is inseparable from perfect charity and perfect tolerance in thought, word and deed. If we penetrate to the roots of uncharitableness and intolerance—weaknesses through which we interfere with the liberty of others—we must realise that they are but a form of hatred—they spring from a love-denuded soil. And if Love were diffused throughout the whole earth, not only would they disappear, but there would be no actions on the part of humanity to call them into being. In this wise each unit of the world-community would be permitted self-expression; but the demonstration of that self-expression would never be offensive to his fellows. And thus we come to the old but alas never yet applied spiritual truism that "alone through Love can the world be saved."

We have in the course of this book emphasised the startling fact that music, owing to its potencies and subtleties, is more certain in its effects than any other medium of expression. For 2,000 years, for example, Christianity has been preached, but the fact remains that it has never been generally applied. Neither dogmas, arguments nor miracles can ever make people spiritual, because all these merely affect the mind, whereas spirituality is engendered in the *heart*. And so, if Wagner had given his dramas to the world solely in the form of literature, it is safe to say they would have had very little effect. Indeed, though the message contained in his *libretti* is an exalted one, it is less so than that contained in their accompanying music, the full import of which Wagner himself hardly realised. Moreover, the inestimable advantage of a message

conveyed through music is that, as we have already implied, it facilitates its own application.

Let us now study that message and all its factors, and endeavour to show the changes which have already resulted from it, and those which *will* result in the future.

Reverting for a moment to Handel, we have seen that under his influence rectitude of thought and action was based on what "*they* do and think"; then later on, under that of Chopin, "what *we* do and think—*we*, the *élite* who are in advance of our fellows." Thus we observe two stages in the moral attitude : (1) faith in, and deference to, the majority ; (2) faith in, and deference to, the *few*. It was for Wagner to inspire the third and final attitude : faith in the one, the man himself, "I do and think what *I* consider right, no matter what others may do or think." Wagner, in fact, was the herald of Individualism, the apostle of Right for Right's sake, the poet of moral heroism. Although it was a necessary stage in evolution, there is no gainsaying that the first attitude above-mentioned was based on moral cowardice, and even the second was not altogether free from it ; and this because only when a man ceases to be dependent on and to fear the opinion of others, can he be said to exhibit true bravery in the sphere of morals. It is, for instance, far easier to be a physical hero than a moral one, seeing that he who performs a feat of daring, whether it be successful or not, reaps nothing but praise, while with the moral hero it is exactly the reverse : the greater the moral feat, the greater the calumny it reaps. An Italian once told the author that if he forgave his wife an act of conjugal infidelity, and did not chastise her and her partner in the act, he would be ostracised by all his friends, branded as a coward and a cuckold, and requested to resign his membership of his club. Since the advent of Wagner, however, even this childish attitude towards the marital relationship is gradually changing, and in his "Drama of Life and

Death," Edward Carpenter pointed out the significant fact that "only when husband and wife could freely confide to each other their affairs of the heart" is unity between them assured.

But to return to individualism. That it is synonymous with a love of freedom must be patent to every one, and consequently that the emancipation of women was a phase of this love must be equally patent. Chopin had started this movement through his refining and culture-inspiring effects; Wagner is now completing it. Indeed, not only are women becoming more independent, but more creative, they are beginning to shine in well-nigh every branch of activity. As writers of fiction, for instance, their number is now prodigious, and it is the desire for self-expression which has largely inspired their productivity. The same desire is impelling them to adopt the medical, the legal, the clerical professions. There are now women barristers, women lawyers, women preachers and women politicians. As for the suffragist and suffragette movements, that love of freedom and self-expression was their inspiring factor requires no mention. What *should*, however, be mentioned, is that although Wagner's influence helped to generalise these movements, it was that of Richard Strauss which brought them to a stage of militancy. Wagner struck the note of freedom, but Strauss emphasised that note, as we shall see later—that is after we have considered Wagner's spiritual effects from an analysis of his music.

CHAPTER X

THE EFFECTS OF WAGNER'S MUSIC

So far we have only dealt with the moral and sociological effects of the purely musical side of Wagner's genius ; we have still to deal with the spiritual ones—a much more difficult task, the burden of which we can only hope to lighten by examining his music itself.

Now the key-note to Wagner's music-drama is unity in diversity. In the old-fashioned opera each number—involving a different melody—was separate and apart ; but with Wagner, on the contrary, although there are a vast array of themes, melodies and *motifs*, they are woven together in such wise as to present one continuous whole. Thus we see at the outset that a profound spiritual principle underlay his entire constructional scheme—the many were blended together in the one. As the waves of the ocean are each different—having a different form—yet are nevertheless one with it and inseparable from it, so each melody, though individual, was one with the great art-work of which it formed a part. Socialistically speaking, Wagner's music was the prototype of the principle of co-operation in contradistinction to competition ; spiritually speaking, it symbolised the mystic truth that each individual soul is unified with the All-soul, the All-pervading Consciousness.

Such then was Wagner's constructional scheme ; but in order to form this great scheme, he had to break down practically all pre-existent musical conventions ; in order to point the way to the ultimate Peace, he had perforce

to bring a sword. In vain did the pedagogues of music look for adherence to their cherished rules of harmony, and for their neatly rounded-off and applause-inviting arias. In vain did they look for correct modulations and resolutions, and all the other technical appurtenances of the nineteenth century ; for in place of them they found unresolved discords, false relations, and transitions into keys which had no perceptible connection with the key just abandoned—all was lawlessness, deliberate disregard of rule and precedent—scandalous *Freedom!* Yet, with this apparent lawlessness, what was Wagner actually accomplishing ? In order to attain unity, he was breaking down the *barriers* to unity, and so setting music, and ultimately mankind, free. As long as human beings are all pulling different ways, they are erecting so many barriers to self-expression and obstructing that very freedom at which they aim ; only when humanity is prepared to accept the ideal of Brotherhood will the conditions for individualism and self-expression be attained ; then will man really be free ; then will dawn the Golden Age of Freedom, the heaven on earth, as presaged in Mystic Writ.

We have briefly examined the structure of Wagner's music, but not its emotional content. That in deference to the requirements of dramatic art, Wagner had to portray a variety of human emotions, including the lower ones, every student is aware, but it is not with these we are concerned, except in so far that by exposing their ugliness he emphasised their undesirability. It is with those more elevated and transcendental ones we must occupy ourselves. By uplifting and intensifying the emotions Wagner taught people to aspire to what in Sanscrit philosophy is termed the *Buddhic*—the consciousness of Unity, of selfless unconditional Love. Personal love, although of the same essence as Divine Love, is conditioned ; we love some one because of certain

characteristics they may or we think they may possess, because of something we owe them, or for other reasons. Not so Divine Love, for the latter is a consciousness in itself, an emotion—if you prefer the word—conditioned by no external circumstances, though it can be awakened or stimulated by meditation, music or occult practices.

Let us make ourselves clearer by bringing an analogy to our assistance. It is the *consciousness* of a man who has taken hashish or a drug of a similar nature which undergoes a change, *not* his external circumstances. The colourless landscape seen a thousand times through the window of the room in which he may be lying, is exactly the same as it was an hour ago, yet now, somehow, it looks beautiful and poetic. But of course whereas the effects of a drug are deleterious and produce a baneful reaction, the effects of *buddhic* consciousness awakened by *natural* means are beneficial both spiritually *and* physically ; moreover, that consciousness itself is infinitely more blissful and exalted.

There are three moments in which Wagner's musical inspiration reaches this sublime emotional altitude—in the *Preislied*, in the *Liebestod* and in the *Karfreitagszauber*. But it should be added that only those people whose spiritual nature is sufficiently evolved can be transported on the wings of those musical moments to a similar height. To revert to our analogy of the effects of a drug, the ordinary unimaginative man could not, while under its influence, have the same grandiose dreams as a De Quincey, although the drug would undoubtedly have *some* effect on his consciousness. And the same applies to the spiritually less evolved man and Wagner's *buddhic* music, taking into consideration, of course, its freedom from any evil effects.

We have singled out these three passages in Wagner's operas as the highest ones, but it must not be supposed that others possess no spiritual content ; this were untrue ;

indeed, many of varying degrees could be cited, did we not wish to keep this book within the comprehension of the lay mind. But even the lay mind will desire to know what are the distinguishing features of Wagner's most exalted moments. Yet since it is impossible to express spiritual facts with material symbols, we cannot adduce the type of explanation which may prove altogether convincing. Only the Initiate who can function on the higher planes of consciousness is in a position to *know* the spiritual value or altitude of a given piece of music—non-initiates can only *feel* it and judge by the *effects* on themselves. A hint, none the less, may be put forward. Those who are able clairaudiently to hear the music of the higher spheres, hear not only one melody, but countless melodies simultaneously, and all blending together in subtle but perfect harmony. The music of earth which most closely resembles that of these higher planes possesses the greatest spiritual value. Thus, when the ingenuity of a composer is such that he can interblend several beautiful melodies so that they can be played simultaneously to produce one harmonious whole, then the spirituality of his music is assured. But there are yet other ways, one being to clothe his melodic outline in chords, *i.e.*, instead of his melodies being composed of single notes or octaves, like those of Tschaikowsky, they may be composed of chords so that each single note of the chords when played in succession forms a melody of itself. In the *Liebestod*, Wagner adopted, to a certain extent, this latter method; in the end of the *Götterdämmerung*, for instance, he adopted the former one. With regard to the *Karfreitagszauber* and the *Preislied*, in these the melodies themselves are expressive of that divine Peace which constitutes the all-pervading essence of super-earthly planes; they are not so much an echo of the music of those planes as an expression of their love-fragranced beatitude.

Some of the effects of Wagner's spiritualising music have already come into manifestation, for all those movements having unity or brotherhood as their ideal are the result of his influence. The diffusion of Theosophy, which demands that its adherents should accept this great ideal, but leaves them free in every other respect, may be mentioned as one of these results. Before Wagner's day, a religion founded on the magnanimous principle that its devotees might "believe anything they liked" would have been regarded as preposterous and totally impracticable. But since Wagner's music is gradually instilling into human beings the sublime truth of unity in diversity, not only has the Theosophical Society recruited a vast number of members from all religions and sects, but many other though less well-known societies of a similar nature have come into being. Even *Masonry* has blossomed out, and a branch known as *Co-masonry* has been formed. Also a new impetus has been given to *Rosicrucianism* by the works of the late Max Heindel in America; and finally and most significantly some attempts have been made to unify the Churches, even though one of the results was to provoke an uproar in Durham Cathedral. Indeed, that uproar might have proved an even greater one had the opponents of this laudable movement realised that it was inspired by the music of an opera having for its story an improper love-intrigue. Be this as it may, we have already said that the full spiritualising effects of Wagner's genius will not be experienced for 200 years, therefore opposition on the part of the less enlightened is to be anticipated.

Hitherto no mention has been made relative to the connection between the personal character of Wagner and his message; and as the omission may give rise to misconceptions, a few words should be added to this chapter. The popular idea of Wagner is that of an immoral man who was separated from his first wife, carried on an

intrigue with a married woman, then eventually united himself to a *divorcée* who abandoned her husband in order to marry him. Thus the question will be asked, how could a man of such easy principles exercise that spiritualising influence we have ascribed to him in this book? And the answer will no doubt appear to many a strange one. Wagner was so intent on the moral salvation of others that he had neither time nor energy left to effect his own. . . . It is not, however, to Wagner's actions we must look for the connection between his character and his work, but to his inner life, his soul, his aspirations: it is in these that we shall find the replica of his message.

That he was obsessed by one exalted idea—the formation of a great brotherhood of art—is conclusively proven; and that when through the ridicule of the Press and other opposition he found it unrealisable, the truth nearly shattered his frame, has also been proven. “His whole life, in fact, was single-heartedly devoted to the regeneration of the human race,”¹ and in art he saw the means of its accomplishment. Moreover, as this aspiration implies, he loved not only the human race, but the brute creation also, his letters being full of charming references to domestic animals, not to mention the fact that “one of his most trenchant essays is directed towards vivisection.”²

C. A. Lidgley concludes the seventh chapter of his book on the great musical dramatist with the touching sentiment: “To Wagner much may be forgiven—for he loved much”; and, no doubt, to those blameless people who feel the necessity for forgiving him, this reminiscence of Mary Magdalene will appear an apt one. Nevertheless, if we are willing to face a none too pleasant truth, it is often those who by their righteousness appear to give no cause for forgiveness to whom in reality it is due—we need to forgive them for having done, or aspired to do, so

¹ “Wagner,” by C. A. Lidgley.

² *Ibid.*

little for Humanity itself. The fact that Wagner was so infinitely more spiritual at heart than many persons who lead conventionally blameless lives shows there was no glaring discrepancy between his character and his message. As the author once expressed in verse :—

Not what this flesh enacts of foolish deeds,
Nor how oft netherwards it falls—nor yet succeeds,
But how divinely high to soul-sublimity it yearns :
That is the truth-crowned symbol that discerns.¹

Wagner had weaknesses : this nobody will deny, but they were so greatly counterbalanced by his virtues that not with perfect justice can even the aphorism be applied to him : “The faults of a man are the night in which he rests from his virtues.”

¹ “The Celestial Aftermath,” Prelude.

CHAPTER XI

RICHARD STRAUSS AND INDIVIDUALISM

THE music of Richard Strauss, despite its individuality and its technical inventiveness, possesses without a doubt a very close kinship with that of Wagner. It is, in fact, an extension, an intensification of certain phases of the Wagnerian genius. Strauss might best be described as Wagner in a greater degree *musically* speaking, and in a lesser degree *æsthetically* and *spiritually* speaking. He has increased, so to say, the Wagnerian harmonic vocabulary—already an enormous one, seeing that Wagner's inventiveness in this direction was unprecedented—he has intensified his exuberance, but he has never reached those rarefied spiritual ethers to which his illustrious predecessor attained. Whether in *Salome*, for instance, Strauss was aiming at the portrayal of an intrinsically spiritual character with his music descriptive of John the Baptist, is difficult to say ; it is possible that he was actuated by a none too subtle irony at this particular moment. In any case the Johannic characterisation-music savours more of Teutonic religious sentimentality than *spirituality* ; there is even something weakly Mendelssohn-like about the passage in question. Moreover, other passages where one feels that Strauss might *wish* to be spiritual, only succeed in being *sweet*. But then Strauss is not obsessed by the same ideals as Wagner was ; he is altogether a different personality ; he is far more of the dramatic composer pure and simple.

All the same, his mission—whether he be conscious of

it or not—is to strike the note of Freedom yet more insistently than Wagner; for whereas the former loosened the cords, Strauss actually severed them. Since his music has been disseminated, social upheavals and revolutions have increased; all the various *isms* aiming at greater freedom, at greater self-expression have become more widely diffused. Although the revolution in Germany was brought to a head by the German defeat, it had been smouldering for some time previously in the hearts of the people, and this was due to the combined influence of Wagner and Strauss. The latter, with the blending of his daring and anti-conventional harmonies and melodic exuberance, emotionalised humanity in such wise that they aspired to break the bonds and become *free*. The very obviousness of some of Strauss's melodies augmented this emotionalising effect: his discords alone merely broke down conventional thinking; it was for his easily comprehensible melodies to fire the emotions which eventually inspire *actions*.

That these actions, of course, took various forms, was to be expected; the poet wrote poems with revolutionary or individualistic content; the orator was impelled to use his oratory in the cause of freedom; the writer turned his attention to that same cause; the painter ignored the conventions of all previous painters; and even the sculptor exclaimed: "I will not be bound by nature's dictates!" Thus, to whatever field of activity we look, this same journeying towards *Freedom* becomes increasingly noticeable. What, again, has inspired the outcry respecting the severity of the marriage-laws: why have people at last demanded easier divorce? It is this same aspiration—woman demands the same rights as man, and she is justified in her demands—she is an individual, not a chattel.

Nevertheless, this mention of Strauss and Wagner in connection with the loosening of the divorce-laws, may

seem to give substance to an idea entertained by not a few people, namely, that the intensely emotional music of these two composers tends to emphasise the erotic passions, and, therefore, what we have termed freedom should more correctly be termed *libertinage*. And although we repudiate this latter imputation, it must be admitted that there do exist people who become sexually stimulated when hearing the music of Wagner and more especially that of Strauss. For this, however, the nature of those individuals in question is more responsible than the music itself. Music of such force naturally stirs the entire being—touches the lower elements as well as the higher. People with little or nothing of emotional control may therefore be thrown into a state of chaotic excitement by Strauss's music which, in contradistinction to Wagner's, reaches only the plane of *emotional* and not of *spiritual* love. But on those of controlled temperament and lofty aspirations, no such effects will be perceptible; spiritual love is, as it were, the higher octave of the emotional, and, in natures capable of feeling such love, the striking of that lower note will immediately be echoed by response from the higher. It should be added, however, that the aforementioned *passional* effects are of a quite transient order.

In England the first Strauss festival took place in 1903, and since then—except during the War—his works have been played more and more frequently. It is also since then that all those freedom-aspiring movements, including militant suffrage, came into prominence.

Before concluding this study of German musicians, a word may be added relative to their connection with the War. For the question has been put to the author: "How is it that so elevating an art as music should have been unable to deter the German people from engaging in such a terrible and disastrous enterprise?" But the interrogator overlooked one very important fact, namely,

that wars are always made by governments, and never by the masses—at least, not by so-called civilised people. Everybody realises by now that it was “the few people round the Kaiser” who wanted the War, not the German people themselves. If the masses of any country desired wars, it would not be necessary to stimulate them into bellicose activity by newspaper lies, patriotic songs and speeches, and all the other artificial means of arousing the war-like spirit. As for the people of Germany, where conscription was a national institution, they could not help themselves, and, moreover, their “righteous indignation” was fired by even greater lies than were meted out to the peoples of their opposing nations.

Still, German music was to a certain extent *indirectly* responsible for the War, just as Handel’s music was indirectly responsible for horsehair sofas. For a number of years the German Government feared a revolution, but thought and hoped by means of the War it could be averted. That the effects of Wagner’s and Strauss’s music inspired that love of freedom which causes the masses to revolt against an autocratic government, we have already implied; and the only other musical influence to be taken into consideration was that of Bach: this, because he inspired intellectuality and German thoroughness. The result was that certain scientists used their intellect for the purpose of inventing deadly machines of war, whether in the form of guns or poisonous gases. But even so, it must be remembered that the scientist who invents these things is actuated far more by scientific motives than by the lust to kill. It would be manifestly unjust to denounce Sir Hiram Maxim, for example, as a man who either had murderous intentions or *desired* war, merely because he invented the machine-gun—he also, by the way, invented a “Pipe of peace.”

In conclusion, we may safely say that the War originated rather through an insufficiency of a certain type of

music—the Unity and Divine Love-inspiring. If the Love aspect of Wagner's music could have borne the fullness of its fruit in twenty years instead of 200, then the War would have been an impossibility; for man would have united together in one great Brotherhood. As it was, in addition to all those other movements enumerated in our last chapter, Wagner inspired that attempt at unity which resulted in the forming of the League of Nations; and any idea that the latter has proved itself ineffectual does not detract from the *motive* which called it into existence.

Richard Strauss is the last great German musician with whom we propose extensively to deal. It will be noticed that Weber, Schubert, Brahms and Reger, individual though they were, have been omitted; and the reasons for this are that (1) Weber exercised a greater influence on music itself and on other composers—notably on Chopin and Wagner—than on character and morals; (2) that the effects of Schubert's music, though responsible for instilling sweetness, gentleness and softness into life, were not sufficiently pronounced to warrant a lengthy survey; (3) that Brahms's music was merely a variant on that of Beethoven and Mendelssohn, *i.e.*, he expressed human emotions and so inspired sympathy; and finally that Max Reger's influence was similar to that of Bach, with this difference: that by means of his unconventional harmonies he aroused a correspondingly unconventional type of thinking. Of one more German composer, Arnold Schönberg, we shall have occasion to speak briefly in our study of the Deva-evolution¹ exponents—a subject which will occupy the second part of this book.

¹ Deva means, roughly speaking, Nature-spirit. And the "Devas are those spiritual intelligences who help in reflecting the outward vibrations carried through the senses to the perceiving eye in terms of consciousness."—

THE DREAMER.

PART II

ESOTERIC CONSIDERATIONS
THE MUSIC OF THE DEVA OR NATURE
SPIRIT EVOLUTION

INTRODUCTION TO PARTS II. AND III.

I HAVE now arrived at a point in my labours which necessitates my entering the domain of esoteric or occult investigation. If my readers are to understand the Nature-spirit exponents, this is unavoidable ; for the Nature-spirits themselves are a part of the occult or hidden side of Nature—they belong to “ Nature’s finer forces,” as a philosopher has expressed it.

Fifty years ago any allusion to “ occultism ” would at once have suggested fraud, charlatanism, fortune-telling and necromancy, but since then time has had its effect on the outlook of, at any rate, a certain section of the public. Instead of imagining that everything they cannot see, hear, or feel has no place in science or scientific research, people are beginning to realise that some of the unseen forces are the most potent in the Cosmos. The discoveries of light-waves which exist yet which no one can see, of substances that burn yet which no one can feel, have revolutionised Thought and turned it aside from that materialistic conception of the universe which at one time held sway over all non-religious thinkers. Thus, in a broad sense of the phrase, Science is becoming more religious, and Religion more scientific. The erstwhile believer is no longer content merely to believe : he desires to *know*, and to this end he needs proofs, and turns to such a cult as, say, Spiritualism to obtain them. Science, on the other hand, penetrates more and more into the subtler realms of Nature, and, in so doing, substantiates much that mystics and religious philosophers have maintained in centuries long gone by.

Thus the materialistic conception of the universe is no longer a tenable or even a fashionable belief. Such a materialistic philosopher as Mr. H. G. Wells, for example, must needs take the Invisible into consideration in the end.

It is always so. Fundamentally, materialism never *has* flourished, and never *will*, because in every human heart there is an instinct which no amount of sophistry can annihilate : it is the instinct to pierce the veil and to reach what is Beyond. Its name is the Divine Discontent, and it is the mother of Religion, of Science, and of Art—a trinity in unity ; for all these are one, yet having divers forms. The religionist craves for greater Love, the scientist for greater Knowledge, and the artist for greater Beauty : that is the only difference. And because of this underlying unity, it is impossible to write the philosophy of the one without including the others.

The conclusions arrived at and hereafter stated are, *in part*, the fruits of twenty-five years' study of a large variety of authors, comprising philosophers, historians, scientists, writers on folk-lore, on Comparative Religion, occultists and mystics of many epochs and of many countries. And I write significantly *in part*, for had I been dependent for much of my information alone on even *so* vast an array of literature, this book, as it stands, could never have been written. Not only were there gaps in knowledge which I was totally unable to bridge, but the whole conception of the book originated in a brain far mightier than my own. Indeed, for that conception and for the most valuable portions of this volume, I am indebted to an Initiate ¹ in Esoteric Wisdom, with whom I have been associated for some time. But with that selflessness and complete lack of vanity which characterises all high Initiates, He begs me not to reveal His name. When He first suggested my writing the book, He even

¹ See Chapter XII.

went so far as to say that no mention of any outside assistance should be made ; but to such a stipulation I naturally could not agree. As He has supplied me with much knowledge which, though familiar to all Initiates, has not been given to the world before (the world only now being ready to receive it), I could not take credit to myself where no credit was due. Moreover, some of the esoteric statements I have to make will fall so strangely on the public ear that, unless I intimate, as I here do, that they are in accordance with lore handed down from Adept to Pupil through centuries, small credence may be given to them. As it so happens, in spite of what Plato and other philosophers had taught me in this respect, I myself was not aware *how* profound is the significance of music, until my Teacher apprised me of the fact ; nay, even that to understand it in its fuller sense, is to gain a greater understanding of Life itself.

As to the nature of Esoteric Wisdom, Yog Vidya, Occult Science—all terms designating the same subject—this I cannot expatiate upon at any great length in a book dealing primarily with music. I must either assume that the reader has read some of the numerous volumes written ¹ by various authors, and is, therefore, familiar with the rudiments of the Higher Occultism, or else that he will be content to wait and familiarise himself with some of those authors before he rejects many of my statements as hopelessly untenable. For I may here remind the non-theosophical section of my readers that there is no one so *cocksure* of a thing as he who knows nothing about it. Thus we still meet people who glibly assert that all occultism is fraud or “fakeology,” to coin a word, and that no such persons as Initiates and Mahatmas exist except in the diseased and foolish imaginations of discredited adventuresses. They are, however, compelled to alter their beliefs, or rather *disbeliefs*, when they

¹ See Bibliography.

actually come into contact with such an Initiate—as I myself have done—and when they witness His astonishing Powers, Health, Wisdom and Virtue. In short, their “cocksureness” in one direction becomes “cocksureness” in the diametrically opposite one.

Nevertheless, the attitude of scepticism, which, though prevalent, is diminishing day by day, is not only excusable, but entirely to be expected. As practical occultism can, with few exceptions, only be learnt under the direct supervision of an Initiate-Teacher, and as vast numbers of slightly clairvoyant persons will not recognise this fact, the result is lack of balance, hysteria and neurasthenia. Although the *theoretical* study of occult science is most beneficial and broadening to the mind, the attempt to *develop* occult powers without the guidance of such a Teacher is likely to end in disaster, and, as naturally follows, to bring the whole science into disrepute. Moreover, the very word *occult* (hidden or secret) adds its quota to this state of “disreputation.” It is assumed that a secret faculty must of necessity be a dubious one. Or the facile but absurd argument is advanced that if such faculties really existed, everybody, especially cultured people, would possess them. One might as well argue that no such faculty as musical talent exists, because it is not possessed by every lawyer, parson or university undergraduate. Why Occult Science is so designated is simply because it deals with those *finer* forces of Nature *which are hidden from all except trained persons who have developed faculties fine enough to perceive them*. These faculties have been loosely and collectively termed the Sixth Sense, but such a designation is inadequate,¹ and is generally and merely applied to those people—often Celts—who possess an “uncanny inkling of the future.” And even as regards these sixth-sense-gifted seers, the sceptic has a convenient “reach-me-down” argument, for if their

¹ The Adept possesses many more “senses” than six.

prophecies turn out to be correct, he exclaims : " That is no proof, coincidence may account for everything ! " And so it *may*, but it requires a high proportion of credulity to accept coincidence as a solution for all unusual happenings.

Thus we come to this vexed question of proof in connection with occult faculties.

It may sound extravagant to state that the congenital *aveugle* has no absolute proof of the faculty of sight ; yet such is the truth, for he merely *believes* in its existence because other people apprise him of the fact. That is to say, he relies on the testimony of normal persons and upon circumstantial evidence. Absolute proof of the existence of sight could only be given to that man if his blindness could be cured and he could actually *see*. Now the position is much the same with regard to occultism and *proof*. Conversationally put, the Master says to his pupil : " By special training I, and all other Initiates, have acquired the power to see those subtler manifestations of nature, which you with your *latent* but *undeveloped* faculties *cannot* see. I can convince you of the existence of *some* of these manifestations by circumstantial evidence, of others I can only convince you—*i.e.*, *prove* to you—by training you in such a way that you will be able to *see* them for yourself." And surely this is in every sense reasonable ; and the pupil who would reply : " I disbelieve in the existence of those manifestations because I cannot see them here and now without any special training," would show himself to be deficient in wit and certainly in the graceful virtue of confidence.

And yet this attitude is—though often unconsciously—adopted by thousands of people where occult, spiritual or mystical wisdom is concerned. They are prepared to take on trust almost anything, say, a noted astronomer may assert, though they have neither the leisure nor the capacity to check all his elaborate calculations, yet they

are not prepared to take on trust the assertions of noted mystics such as Swedenborg or Jacob Boehme. Nevertheless it is more reasonable to trust the statements of an Adept in Esoteric Science than it is to trust those of the ordinary material scientist, however famous he may be. For whereas the pre-requisites to becoming a prominent scientist are one-pointedness, great brain-capacity, pains-taking and talent or even genius, the pre-requisites to becoming an Adept are more formidable still. They comprise all the previously mentioned qualities in the most literal sense, and, in addition, perfect tolerance towards all beliefs, a profound love for humanity, complete indifference to name and fame, compassion for all living beings, and truthfulness carried to the highest degree. Thus the Adepts work for no reward, take no money for their Teachings, write no books and live in obscurity ; their Power, Wisdom and Love being known only to their pupils and initiates. What constitutes a part of their work will be enlarged upon now that I come to deal with Music and the Deva-evolution. Suffice it here to add that, the nature of occultism and proof being such as is here set forward, we are unavoidably dependent on authority for much that is stated hereafter. I am aware that to certain types of mind the very word authority is apt to suggest weakness rather than strength, and, this being so, I have purposely been at some pains to explain with " what manner " of authority ¹ we have to deal.

¹ But even so, an Adept himself has said : " Never accept the statements of authority if they go contrary to reason and logic, for then you may be sure that authority is at fault."

CHAPTER XII

MUSICIANS AND THE HIGHER POWERS

FOR the benefit of non-theosophical readers it should be pointed out that Initiates are of varying degrees, ranging from the comparatively modest to the spiritual altitude of a Christ, a Krishna or a Buddha.¹ By earnest seekers who possess the necessary qualifications, a few of these Initiates may be met with in the flesh—for They do not *all* live in absolute seclusion, as some theosophists imagine ; nor are They to be “contacted,” spiritually or otherwise, solely by members of the Theosophical Society. Indeed, They are not at all concerned with whether people belong to this or that society, religion or denomination, but whether they are fit subjects to be used for furthering the spiritual evolution of the race. The prerequisites to their employment for this purpose are, if limited, not entirely without variation : one-pointedness, altruism, purity of heart, love of the beautiful, are phrases to be found in many books, but often, unfortunately, with an interpretation as inadequate as facile fancy has superimposed upon the Biblical text : “ *Blessed are the pure in heart* ”—the pure in heart being taken to mean those who practise complete sexual continence. Nevertheless, as Fielding Hall has pointed out, this phrase does not mean that a man should be unsexed but *unselfed*. If the popular interpretation were the true one, not only would Adepts look almost in vain for co-workers in the great

¹ See E. Schuré, “The Great Initiates” and “The Initiate,” by His Pupil ; also “The Initiate in the New World,” “The Adept of Galilee,” etc,

scheme, but no souls could be incarnated to carry on the human race for which that scheme was devised. Similarly, if They looked for absolute perfection in all the other qualifications, Their recruits would be exceedingly limited. That before a pupil can undergo the higher Initiations he must have attained to a degree of moral and spiritual wisdom far in advance of his fellows is assuredly true ; but with these high Initiations we are not concerned in this book ; we are concerned with men who possess just a sufficiency of one or of several qualities to render them suitable instruments for the particular branch of work which the Adepts require to be done. *Why* the creative artist can be used by the Adept is owing to his receptivity, his impressionability ; *how* he can be used remains for us to explain.

All high Initiates, "Masters," or Adepts—the designation is unimportant—have the power to separate their "spirits" from their physical bodies, and so travel in the unseen worlds. They have also the power, by means of thought-transference, to impress upon the minds of such persons as are sufficiently receptive, any ideas They may think fit. But it should be added that when we write *impress*, we use the word in a *suggestionistic* sense, and in no other ; *i.e.*, They *suggest* ideas to the poet, musician, painter, writer or philosopher, They do not *force* ideas upon him. Indeed, the recipient is usually quite unconscious whence come his inspirations, and has no suspicion that he is, as the case may be, either the subject of thought-transference, or temporarily "overshadowed" by an unseen Presence. Only when the artist is at the same time an accepted pupil of an Adept and in close touch with Him, can he know these facts. But for this it is necessary that he should possess other qualifications than merely those demanded by the pursuit of his art—he must be an untiring student and practitioner of Esotericism itself.

The few hundred Adepts scattered all over the world are known as the Great White Brotherhood, and They constitute, as it were, the link between humanity and those super-physical planes peopled by beings ranging from the "spook" of the spiritistic séance to those beings or angels of unimaginable spiritual grandeur, each having its particular place and function in the Cosmos. The White Brotherhood is symbolically so called, because It works in accordance with the Divine Will in contradistinction to the Black Brotherhood, that vast organisation of the Powers of Evil, which works *against* the Divine Will.

Now there are in the White Brotherhood—we may leave aside the Black for the present—certain Adepts and Their pupils who take it upon Themselves to guide and watch over the arts¹ and their evolution. (It must be emphasised, however, that They never interfere with individual free will; They but guide and suggest—never coerce.) This particular group of Adepts, knowing that the spiritual phase of Wagner's music would not bear the fullness of its fruitage for so long a period, determined to inspire a type of music which should augment spirituality by means of *knowledge*. Through music man should at last come to *know*, not merely to *believe*, that another world with its millions of denizens existed besides the physical. And not only this, but that another scheme of evolution was in progress, entirely different from that of humanity. Mankind, in the West, was also to learn as the result, the truths of re-incarnation and the law of Karma.²

Now there is a trait in human nature which impels people to believe solely what they *wish* to believe—that is, if they have any choice in the matter. As Fielding Hall points out in his book, "The Hearts of Men," there

¹ Others concern themselves with science, philosophy, inventions, religions, etc.

² That which is the result of past cause or causes.

is every bit as much evidence to prove the existence of ghosts as has served to condemn a man to death, but people refuse to admit their existence nevertheless : they think the admission beneath their intellectual dignity. And if this attitude is adopted relative to the existence of ghosts, it is even more pronounced where nature-spirits are concerned—to believe in “spooks” may be undignified and “credulous,” but to believe in fairies is simply childish ; the Race has at least quitted the Human nursery ! Yes, but without profiting by what the nursery had to teach, and it now has to return and pick up the lost stitches of knowledge.

And so the fact remains, that not only do nature-spirits and fairies exist—being visible to the trained seer—but that there are vast hosts of different species. Beginning with the lowest, there are Earth-fairies (Gnomes), Land-surface fairies, Water-fairies (Undines), Fire-spirits (Salamanders), and Cloud-spirits. All these pertain to the physical world, the bodies of gnomes actually interpenetrating the earth.

Yet how is this possible ? A jar—to give an analogy—may be filled with sand, but it is not really full, because we may still add water to that sand ; then, if we aerate the water, we add something more—gas ; and consequently sand, water and gas can all three occupy the same space in that one jar. Gas is not perceptible to sight, yet we know from other evidence that it exists ; it is the same with fairies and gnomes ; we know they exist because they are visible to clairvoyant vision.

The bodies of all the above-mentioned nature-spirits are composed of *etheric* matter, the most dense, comparatively speaking, of the finer matter. Next in degree comes a yet more rarefied form of beings—these pertain to the Emotional Plane and are composed of Emotional Plane matter ; some of them also are nature-spirits, but of a higher type. Yet, although they are following a

different line of evolution, they inhabit the same plane as those human souls who have passed over from the earth at death, and are either awaiting re-incarnation or else the "ascent" to a still higher plane ere they once more become embodied in the flesh. These nature-spirits are called, in Sanscrit, Kama-devas, because they inhabit the Emotional or Desire-Plane. It is true they appear more beautiful in form and colour than anything to be seen on our earth, but even so, they cannot compare with those Devas which live on the yet higher plane—the *Mental*, or what in Christian terminology would be called Heaven. These are the "Angels," whose actual method of communication is through music and colour, not speech. Their every movement, in fact, is productive of an exquisite sound and hue. They are called Rupa-Devas, and they inhabit the same plane as those disembodied humans who by their fine qualities have "ascended" to this particular sphere to enjoy their celestial though not inactive holiday between their incarnations. The *human* souls who here sojourn are the philosophic, artistic, philanthropic, devotional, and those who possessed a liberal abundance of affection and kindness in their natures. There is, however, a higher division of this plane on which a correspondingly higher type of Deva has its existence, and on which also Adepts and Initiates function in Their subtle bodies, while Their physical bodies are entranced or asleep. Above this plane are yet others, peopled by still more exalted Beings called in Oriental religions *Adityas*, Dhyani Buddhas, etc., and in the Christian tradition, Archangels.

Thus we have enumerated the various participators in the Deva-evolution, ranging from the gnome to the archangel; and it now remains to state why we employ the word Evolution in this connection—it is because even the grotesque little gnome is in the course of millions of years destined to become an exalted Angel.

For all Life, visible and invisible, is subject to that one evolutionary Law, and works together for the carrying out of the Divine Will. Each entity from the smallest to the highest has its own particular work to perform, and just as the most exalted Deva uses His mighty intelligence in the forming of world-destinies, so the little nature-spirit uses *his* intelligence in directing the processes of the vegetable-kingdom. It is by coming into closer contact with the nature-spirits that man will come more and more to imbibe of the wondrous spirit of Nature itself, and to understand the depths of its beauty. As Mr. C. Jinarajadasa melodiously phrases it : "Whoso . . . can feel with the flower, rejoice with the birds, sympathise with the delights and cravings of the animals, is a poet, a seer, whose imagination senses what is the purpose for which they were planned. Not merely to look at a landscape, but to think and feel as each blade of grass, as each shrub and tree opens its heart to the sun's rays, as each of them contributes its tiny note to Nature's wondrous harmony, is to transcend man's limitations and put on the attributes of an Angel, a Deva, and, lastly, of God Himself."

But this is not all ; by coming into closer touch with the soul of Nature, man's own soul and his body will be healed. There is healing magnetism in the earth, in the sun, in the trees ; there is a healing power in colour : when man shall understand these " finer forces of nature," he will attain spiritual and corporeal health. It is for music to facilitate that understanding.

CHAPTER XIII

MAN'S SUBTLE BODIES

For a better comprehension of much to be stated hereafter, it is advisable at this juncture to deal with Man's *subtler bodies*, or "sheaths of the soul." And though much to be set forth in this chapter will be familiar to theosophical students, it is well for them to consider it in its specific connection with music. Moreover, the lay-reader has to be taken into account in writing a book dealing with music, even if it be written from the esoteric standpoint. Through a knowledge of these subtler bodies, he will not only better comprehend the effects of that music of earlier times to be dealt with in Part III., but will also realise more fully (in retrospect) the effects of all those "Great Masters" we have just been studying.

Man's subtler bodies, then, constitute what is known as the aura or auric egg, and are perceptible to the trained clairvoyant of whatever denomination or school of thought; they surround the physical body and interpenetrate one another as well as the physical body itself. In theosophical nomenclature they are termed severally: (1) Etheric body, (2) Astral body, (3) Mental body; but for the purpose of this book, they are best tabulated as follows:—

- I. { Physical body or organism, composed of gross matter.
Sensation body or organism, composed of fine matter.

2. Emotional body or organism, composed of still finer matter.
3. Mental body or organism, composed of very fine matter.

It will be noted that we have bracketed together the physical and sensation-bodies, and this because they are so intimately connected that only during an anæsthetic do they become dissociated, whereas the emotional and mental leave the physical in sleep. If a trained seer watches an operation, he can observe the various bodies, *including* the sensation-body, being forced out of the physical by the action of the drug. In the case of a local anæsthetic, however, only a small part of the *sensation-body* is extruded, the other bodies remaining in the physical. The same occurs when one's arm "goes to sleep," for it is possible to force out a part of the sensation-body through pressure ; under such conditions the subtle replica of the arm may clairvoyantly be seen projecting from the shoulder ; but when the physical-body arm "wakes up," the *sensation-body* arm is reabsorbed, resulting in that feeling of "pins and needles" familiar to all.

It will now have become apparent why we use the term *sensation-body*—*i.e.*, because only when the latter is unified with the physical are sensations possible—in other words, sensation is produced by the conjunction of these two bodies, the one having no feeling independent of the other. But it should be noted that the *sensation-body* is especially significant as regards the present enquiry, for it is on this that the vibrations of music first strike before they affect either the *emotional* or *mental bodies*. Thus the *sensation-body* is the bridge between the physical and the higher ones, in that it is not possible for comparatively coarse vibrations of sound to affect highly subtilised matter without an intermediary.

We may now pass on to a consideration of the *emotional*

and *mental bodies*, the second and third we have enumerated.

If a trained clairvoyant looks at the aura of a savage, it reveals an entirely undeveloped *emotional body*, ugly in colouring, small in size, and lacking in all beauty of form. The aura of the moderately evolved man, on the other hand, reveals a larger *emotional body* with purer colouring and more beautiful form. Further, in the aura of the savage there is practically no *mental body* discernible at all, whereas in the average man it varies in size and beauty of colour according to the depth of his intellect and the loftiness of his thoughts. It stands to reason, therefore, that both these bodies are developed in proportion to our emotional and mental lives, and it is for this reason, by the way, that the human aura is an indication of character for those who have the power to see it and to understand the significance of its many hues.

Nor do these bodies, with the exception of the *sensation-body*, perish with the disintegration of the physical organism ; each subtle body, in fact, *is attuned to its corresponding plane of consciousness, and functions independently on that plane when released from the physical envelope*, just as a child functions independently on the physical plane when released from its mother's womb. We may pursue the simile even further : if the foetus is badly nourished, the child will be weakly ; if its parent is coarse or comes of tainted stock, the child will more than likely be coarse and tainted—and so forth.

But granted that these subtler planes—whether in religious phraseology they be called Heaven, Hell, Purgatory, Kamaloka, Devaloka, or Elysian Fields—granted that they constitute the world of the departed, they bear an even deeper significance in relation to our physical world than the lay mind imagines. And especially is this the case with the *emotional plane*. As the emotions of Man influence the *emotional plane*, so does

the *emotional plane* in its turn influence Man, *i.e.*, his thoughts and feelings. Thus there is a constant interaction between the two. How is it that in certain countries one finds a predominance of certain emotions? The answer is, because the so-called "atmosphere" or aura—in reality the *emotional plane*—is saturated with those particular emotions. During the War, for instance, German Switzerland was very pro-German, while French Switzerland was very pro-Allies: now it was told to me as a curious (?) fact, that if an inhabitant of German Switzerland came to stay in French Switzerland, after an astonishingly short time he became as strongly pro-Allies as he had originally been pro-German. And why? Simply because he had moved into that pro-Allies-impregnated aura, *i.e.*, that special part of the *emotional plane* which was located in French Switzerland.

It is instructive to take this cursory view of Man's subtler bodies and their corresponding planes, because of the important part that music has played and continues to play in their development. We come to see how each type of music affects one body or the other, and, correspondingly, the three domains—the mental, emotional and material or physical. Thus, in Part III., we shall see that the quarter-tone of Indian music especially affects the *mental body*, hence the domain of mind, philosophy, metaphysics; the third-tone of ancient Egyptian music especially affected the *emotional body*, hence the domain of the emotions—ritual, music and occult knowledge; the half-tone of European music especially affects the sensation-physical body—hence the domain of Matter: mechanics, government of men, practicality. Nor is the reason far to seek; the quarter-tone is the most subtle division of the note, therefore it influences the most subtle of the higher bodies; the third-tone is a less subtle division, therefore it influences the correspondingly less

subtle *emotional body*, the half-tone is the least subtle of all, therefore it influences the physical.¹

Yet although we have stated on *what* music operates, we have as yet not stated *how* ; that is to say, the *modus operandi* considered *esoterically*—for the exoteric *modus operandi* we have dealt with in Chapter I.

In the Hermetic Philosophy there is a maxim : “ As above, so below.” Now, speaking in general, music operates in accordance with that Law ; but what is actually heard of music is only its physical manifestation consequent upon its vibrations ; these pertain to the “ below ” ; or, otherwise expressed, we only perceive the effects of those musical vibrations on the physical plane, but we do not perceive the much further-reaching effects created by that music on the higher planes ; *and it is just these*, pertaining to the “ above,” which influence our various subtler bodies (and hence our characters), because, in addition, they influence those planes themselves. These effects can be perceived by the trained seer, and assume both forms and colours coincident with the artistic value and emotions which the music expresses. For instance, the preponderating colour produced by music expressive of devotion, is blue—that being the colour of Devotion on the higher planes, and, consequently, in the *emotional body*. Hence, if the seer looks at the aura of even a fairly devotional person, he will find in it this colour. Now, as like attracts like, especially on the super-physical planes, the blue produced by that devotional music will tend to increase the blue in the aura of that particular person, and so to increase the attribute of Devotion. It is the same with all other emotions and their corresponding colours. But the following point should be specially noted : where a man is entirely lacking in a particular quality, and hence in its corresponding colour, then in that particular respect the

¹ This naturally does not imply that it *exclusively* influences the physical.

subtler manifestation of music cannot affect him. Were it otherwise, the most unevolved souls would develop with an astonishing rapidity, and in the large cities where there are concert-halls and opera houses, squalor and sordidness would be non-existent. That such is not the case, we are all too sadly aware. None the less, even the most undisciplined characters are susceptible to the beneficial influence, however slight, of such music as they actually hear, and for this reason even barrel-organs serve a useful purpose in the slums.

There is, however, one very important point we have still to add, namely, that the subtler effects of *played* music, *i.e.*, the colours and forms produced on the *emotional plane*, endure for some time after the actual sounds have died away. In other words, though the music itself is no longer heard, the emotional content of that music is operative for a varying while within a certain radius around the spot where it was played. To give a simile, if an inadequate one : when we throw a pebble into a pond, though the pebble itself is small, the rings it produces on the surface of the water are large. If there be a bit of straw floating a considerable distance from the spot where the pebble sank, after an appreciable space of time that bit of straw will be agitated by one of those rings. Now the same law on a much larger scale obtains in connection with the subtler effects of music. Although the Queen's Hall itself—wherein we will suppose a certain work is being performed—occupies a comparatively small amount of space, the colours and forms created by that work on the *emotional plane* extend for some distance around. It is for this reason that *it is quite unnecessary for a person to be within earshot of music in order to benefit by its effects*. Nor must we forget the durability of those effects. Presuming a man lives in an outlying suburb, but comes into London daily for business purposes, although he lives and sleeps outside the subtler influences

of that music, he comes under them every day during business hours.

To summarise : the art of music, as will be gathered from all the foregoing, is operative in two ways—grossly and subtly ; on the physical plane “heard strains” by their charm possess the power to “soothe the savage breast,” while “unheard strains” possess hidden powers of a “telepathic” nature which affect our subtler bodies directly or through the “emotional atmosphere,” and so educate the “soul.”

But an important objection may here arise. Let us again suppose there is a concert at Queen's Hall, and that a hundred yards away there is a small orchestra playing an entirely different kind of music at a cinema : is not the effect produced in the unseen planes one of discordant chaos ? And yet we answer : not so—for in the unseen planes there is another dimension of space¹ to be taken into account—a fourth dimension—and also the fact that one type of vibration does not interfere with another type, any more than the vibrations of the sunlight interfere with those of the hidden rays of wireless telegraphy. Only if two concerts took place within earshot and actually produced discord on the physical plane, would that discord be reproduced on the unseen planes—not otherwise.

There is, however, still the effect on our subtler bodies to be considered—the effect of two or more musical performances *not* within earshot. In this case, each person will, in accordance with our former statement, be affected by that quality to which he is most capable of responding. For example, let us suppose there is a man living midway between the Queen's Hall and the cinema, and that in the Queen's Hall a fugue of Bach is being, or has been, performed, while in the cinema a violinist is, or has been, playing the second movement of Mendelssohn's

¹ See Hinton, “Fourth Dimension.”

Violin Concerto. If the man in question has much yellow in his aura—yellow being the colour of intellect—then the yellow produced by Bach's music ¹ will increase it, for as we have said, like attracts like. And let us suppose that he is an abnormal man without a grain of sympathy in his character, and consequently not a trace of apple-green—the corresponding colour—in his aura, then he will be impervious to the influence of Mendelssohn's music. Should he, on the other hand, possess a certain degree of this attribute, then he will derive benefit from both concerts, the one acting on his *emotional body*, the other on his *mental*. Needless to say, this principle is susceptible of countless variations, the human aura being composed of a variety of colours corresponding to a man's many attributes. Thus several different influences may be brought to bear on the *emotional body* alone at one and the same time.

¹ See *ante*.

CHAPTER XIV

CÉSAR FRANCK—THE BRIDGE BETWEEN THE HUMANS AND THE DEVAS

ALTHOUGH César Franck was born nearly twenty years later than Berlioz, he was the father of that French school of composers which was destined to introduce quite a new element in musical *content*, if not altogether in form. For Berlioz, with all his ingenuity, must be regarded as an experimentalist; he was never able to introduce into his music that subtle ingredient which influences character and moulds morals; he influenced music itself, and prepared the way for the genius of Wagner, and to some extent for Franck.

The latter "first saw the light of day," to use an expression characteristic of his era, at Liège in 1822; and it is not without significance that the first Deva-exponent should be one of the most touching and beautiful characters in the annals of musical biography. His portrait is familiar to all music-lovers, but only those who have read M. Vincent d'Indy's *study* relating to him will obtain a glimpse of the soul of this remarkable man. Even those who met him in life—casually, that is to say—never suspected the genius that lay hidden in the heart of that strange little figure, so often to be seen hurrying along, "invariably absent-minded and making grimaces, running rather than walking," and "dressed in an overcoat a size too large, and trousers a size too short." Nevertheless, that little figure whose face was as quaintly adorned—he had thick grey side-whiskers but a clean-

shaven mouth and chin—as the rest of his person, radiated a love so warm and selfless “that his pupils not only cared for him as a father, but were attached to each other in and through him.”—Yet though he merited so much, his external life was one of unutterable drudgery.¹ From morning to night, apart from those he gave to his inner circle of disciples, he was obliged to give lessons to none too intelligent amateurs, and what is more, to contend with the stupid myopia of jealous academic conservatoire professors. It was characteristic of his noble nature, however, that far from bearing Fate or *them* any ill-will, he seemed to be oblivious of their evil intentions. With all his literary interests and intellectual pursuits there was something so intrinsically naïve, trusting and childlike in his heart, that to disbelieve in the goodness of humanity, even in the face of evidence to the contrary, was impossible. No wonder that César Franck proved a fit instrument in the hands of the Higher Powers, and that the Initiates could so mould his inspirational faculties that he could receive the higher Deva-message, either through Them, or in certain conditions direct from the Devas Themselves.

Those who, while in the body, can clairvoyantly see the Devas, or else bring back the memory of Them after super-conscious trance, know that one of the chief Deva-characteristics is Love ; but, of course, this attribute varies with the spiritual altitude of the Devas in question—in the little nature-spirit it is existent, but to a correspondingly lesser degree. That a tone-poet who was in close touch with the higher type of Deva should manifest this same love was both natural and significant. Yet, unless to begin with he had possessed a measure of that beautiful attribute in his soul, it would not have been possible for either Adept or Deva to inspire him. As the sunlight can only dimly penetrate the black cloud, so can

¹ “César Franck,” by Vincent d’Indy, John Lane.

the sunlight of Love only dimly penetrate an impure human aura. But apart from Franck's love-nature, there are other signs that he was closely in touch with the Deva-evolution. He was a master of that form of improvisation which Initiates know to be the devaic type ; moreover, his achievements in this direction were perhaps even more inspired than his written work ; and this lends much weight to our contention. "For César Franck had, or rather *was*, the genius of improvisation." In the "dusk of the organ-loft" in that church of St. Clotilde, where he held the post of organist, every Sunday and feast-day he would "pour out his soul" in wonderful fantasias "which were often far more lofty than many skilfully elaborated compositions."¹ And it is just this spontaneity, thus finding expression, which is so evidential of the Deva-inspired, or the Deva-overshadowed man. But then Franck was an ardent believer, and we read that every Sunday during Mass "he would leave the organ-loft, and, kneeling in a corner of the gallery, prostrate himself in fervent adoration before the Almighty Presence at the altar." Nay, this simple act of faith on his part is full of meaning to those who, gifted with seership, can perceive the radiant-coloured Devas as they fill the church, having been evoked by means of that ancient piece of Ceremonial Magic. It was then, no doubt, that César Franck came into even closer touch with those "Shining Ones" whose very speech he so often endeavoured to reproduce in earthly music ; it was then that "he assuredly foresaw and conceived the sublime melodies which afterwards formed the groundwork of *The Beatitudes*."²

César Franck lived to be sixty-eight years of age. With a life remarkable for its energy and freedom from disease, he was the first composer, as we shall presently

¹ "César Franck," by Vincent d'Indy, John Lane.

² *Ibid.*

see, whose mission it was to break down disease in the lives of others. He died on November 8th, 1890, and his journey to the grave a few days afterwards was as free from all outward display as had been his life. Not one representative of the Conservatoire where he had taught for so long came to his funeral, not one eminent professor, nor official from the Ministry, nor the Department of Fine Arts. Every person of worldly eminence who received an invitation excused himself—there was, in fact, a strange epidemic of brief but debilitating indisposition which attacked all the great musical professors of Paris just around November 8th that year! And so “only the Master’s numerous pupils, his friends and the musicians whom his untiring kindness had won over to him” appeared at his graveside. It was an all the more poetical ending to an inwardly poetical life, and the final touch of poetry was added when M. Chabrier delivered that valedictory oration which deserves to be recorded in many books. It ended: “Farewell, Master, and take our thanks, for you have done well. In you we salute one of the greatest artists of the century, and also the incomparable teacher whose wonderful work has produced a whole generation of forceful musicians, believers and thinkers, armed at all points for hard-fought and prolonged conflicts. We salute, also, the upright and just man, so humane, so distinguished, whose counsels were sure, as his words were kind. Farewell . . .”

An examination of César Franck’s music reveals to us two distinct elements, the human and the ethereal. The second movement of the Violin Sonata affords an instance of the expression of the former, the noted *Cantilene* in the Pianoforte Quintet affords an instance of the expression of the latter. It is owing to the combination of these two phases that we have designated Franck a bridge between the human evolution and that of the Deity; he expresses the emotions of both, and so co-ordinates the mortal with

the celestial. As M. Gustave Devepas writes : " César Franck's music makes us neither beast nor angel. Keeping a steady balance, as far removed from materialistic coarseness as from the hallucinations of a doubtful mysticism, it accepts humanity with all its positive joys and sorrows, and uplifts it, without dizziness, to peace and serenity, by revealing the sense of the Divine. Thus it tends to contemplation rather than to ecstasy. The hearer who abandons himself with docility to its beneficent influence will recover from the superficial agitation at *the centre of the soul*, and, with all that is best within himself, will return to the attraction of the *supremely desirable* which is at the same time the *supremely intelligible*. Without ceasing to be human he will find himself nearer to God. This music, which is truly as much *the sister of prayer as of poetry*, does not weaken or enervate us, but rather *restores to the soul, now led back to its first source, the grateful waters of emotion, of light, of impulse ; it leads back to heaven and to the city of rest.*"

And to this M. Vincent d'Indy adds : " In a word, it leads us from egoism to love . . . from the world to the soul, from the soul to God."

The effects of César Franck's music are closely akin to those of Higher Thought, Christian Science, and all other forms of metaphysical healing. But, unfortunately, as yet only the Initiate understands the *rationale* of these various methods which is connected with an understanding of man's subtler bodies. The truth is that many diseases originate in these subtler bodies ; it is for this reason that drugs prove so ineffectual in the curing of certain maladies. That distressing emotional states react on the body is known to all ; that a great shock will turn the hair white, or cause a stroke, or heart-failure, requires no pointing out. But these are only the more obvious results ; there are others more insidious which arise from temperament, from perpetual worrying,

from the suppression of feeling, from inhibition of self-expression, from manifold yearnings noble and ignoble. And how are these to be cured? The occultist answers: by the same method, but not by the same *means* as that by which we attempt to heal the physical body—that is, by purification. Remove the impurities from the gross body, and it is healed; remove the impurities from the subtle body, and it, too, is healed, and its denser envelope will then follow suit. True, the healing will be more speedy if treatment be applied to both bodies,¹ but if *solely* applied to the physical, the cure will merely be a temporary one, since the real cause has not been removed. One may eliminate the acids from the blood of a man who worries, but unless he ceases to worry they will form again and again. Nor will it suffice to admonish him not to worry; we must cure his *emotional body*—the seat of the disturbance—by spiritual or mental means, and so bring the two bodies once again into harmony.

When the Christian Scientist concentrates on the Divine Mind, he is unconsciously purifying his subtler bodies, and bringing them into alignment with the physical, the result being, in manifold cases, a slow but certain cure.² Those who have the opportunity of watching this process clairvoyantly see how the aura gradually loses its coarse muddy colours which are replaced by others of pure and beautiful shades, while at the same time the aura, as a whole, instead of being shapeless and ugly, assumes a more definite form. But the orthodox Christian Scientist will probably deny the above statements. If we ask him how he cures disease he will answer that it is Love which cures, or the substitution of Truth for Error; that disease is not a Reality—philo-

¹ This is to abolish the mischief already wrought.

² Provided, of course, that the ravages upon the physical body have not gone too far, or, in the case of one person treating another, that the patient does not consciously or subconsciously resist the healer.

sophically and not materially speaking, of course ; in short, he will answer more or less in accordance with the perception engendered by his own temperament or even with that of his patient. Be this as it may, it is by thinking spiritual thought, or, better said, by directing his Imagination (we use the word in its loftiest sense) towards himself or a patient *with the intention to cure*, that he achieves his results. In other words, he co-ordinates the spiritual and the physical ; and this is exactly what is also achieved through the music of César Franck.¹ The tendency of his music is to destroy not only diseases of the body, but by this co-ordination also those of the soul ; and it destroys them with the purifying essence of Seraphic Love. As darkness and the sunlight cannot exist in one and the same place, neither can sorrow and disease exist where shines the joy-and-health-giving Love of the Angelic Hosts.

We have arrived at a stage in our investigation of musical effects where we are dealing with species of the tonal art which can only be *sensed*, and not explained. And how can this be otherwise, seeing that only Initiates and students of occult science know any concrete facts about the Deva evolution ? We grant the Irish, Scotch and Welsh—in fact, old-race souls gifted with “second sight”—are aware of the existence of nature-spirits and even of some of the higher Devas, but this does not imply that they realise their purpose in the Divine Plan. Many of us, while taking a country walk, may see hundreds of insects, but only if we have read the works of a naturalist-poet like J. H. Fabre can we obtain some insight into their life and habits, and the purpose *they* serve in the world of verdant nature. Thus, when we say that César Franck was a Deva-exponent and exercised the influence

¹ Though his influence, of course, not being as concentrated as that between healer and patient, his effects will require many years to become general.

previously stated, unless the reader is prepared to peruse the J. H. Fabres of occultism and verify our statements, he must either take them on trust or reject them. All that we can add about Franck is that through the subtlety, "nobility and expressive value of his melodic phrase, and the originality of his harmonic combinations,"¹ he contrived to reproduce some of the Deva-music of the higher planes for the benefit of our earthly ears. The result of his achievement was that diffusion of practical mysticism throughout Europe which began towards the end of last century. Since the advent of Franck, the science of healing with the aid of "Nature's finer forces" has vastly increased. Verily, as M. Chabrier said when bidding him that final good-bye, *he had done well*, for to inspire those measures whereby the burden of sorrow and disease may be lifted from the souls and bodies of a suffering humanity is to have accomplished a great work which merits our undying gratitude.

¹ Vincent d'Indy's phrases.

CHAPTER XV

GRIEG, TSCHAIKOWSKY AND DELIUS

As Franck was an intermediary between the higher Devas and humanity, Edvard Grieg was an intermediary between the little nature-spirit and humanity. Although his creations were in many respects charming and individual, they did not reach the altitude attained by the French composer. Nor, in view of what we have just written, could this be demanded—the nature-spirits are quaint little entities whose relationship to even the lesser Devas merely resembles that of our domestic animals to *us*; and, therefore, to expect either great loftiness or profundity from their musical interpreter—and their *first* at that—would be to expect the impossible.

That Grieg should be born in Scandinavia is not without its occult significance; for there, as in Ireland, Scotland and Wales, the nature-spirits are nearer to humanity than in countries where well-nigh every second town pollutes the physical atmosphere with its smoke-belching chimneys, and the spiritual atmosphere with its materialism and acquisitiveness. Thus, in residing in Norway, Grieg lived in close touch with the untarnished soul of nature; also the folk-song of that country which exercised such a marked influence on his work, was already to some extent expressive of the nature-spirit element. As the writer in Grove's "Dictionary" remarks: "Grieg's music carries the fragrance of his native pine-woods into the concert-room"—yes, and in the last number of the "Peer Gynt Suite," he also carries a suggestion of the dancing gnomes.

It is not our intention, however, to expatiate at any length on the Norwegian composer, for his influence on mankind was not a pronounced, though at the time in some respects a very necessary, one : he inserted the thin end of the wedge that was eventually to widen the crevice through which mankind should obtain a larger view over the nature-spirit world. It was he who paved the way for Frederick Delius, Claude Achille Debussy, Stravinsky and others, and finally for Scriabin—the greatest Deva-exponent who has so far appeared in the field of art.

Nevertheless, Grieg was not entirely alone in his unconscious endeavours to span the chasm between the two worlds ; three years before his birth ¹ another composer—destined to reap an astonishing popularity—was born at Kamsko-Votinsk, in Russia. And although it must be admitted that a very large proportion of his work was almost too obviously human—we allude to Tschaikowsky—seeing that at times he did undoubtedly write nature-music, he, too, must be accepted as an intermediary. He may, owing to his glaring unsubtleties, be regarded by the genuine and more pronounced nature-spirit exponents as a musical vulgarian, but their attitude does not alter the facts. That attitude, indeed, is perfectly comprehensible ; for one of the chief characteristics of nature-music is its subtlety, and, therefore, to composers like Ravel and Debussy, in whom this virtue is very pronounced, “ the most un-Russian of all the Russians ” could not be expected to appeal ; they had outgrown his immature efforts which no doubt savoured to them of the nursery. If, however, despite their censure, we care to examine parts of Tschaikowsky’s music, we detect a certain primitive quaintness not unlike that of Grieg, though by this we mean the spirit of Grieg’s work and not the form. But even so this quaintness to be found in both composers is more *reminiscent* of nature-music, than actually *like* it,

¹ Viz., in 1843.

judging from how it sounds to clairaudient ears. The work which Grieg and Tschaikowsky accomplished was more to draw attention to the existence of the nature-spirit music by portraying what they *thought* it was like, than by reproducing it *actually*. For this the time was not ripe, seeing that the knowledge of the Deva-evolution was not intended for the world until after Wagner's influence had spread to a certain extent. *Individualism* was first to take a degree of hold on humanity ; but at a given stage, in order to prevent it from assuming the proportions of a ruthless selfishness and a trampling over others, an added knowledge of the unseen was to be vouchsafed to mankind. Only when humans have attained a measure of wisdom through a wider knowledge of the laws which govern the universe will *individualism* be combined with moral security. As the Agnostic movement was inspired by an Initiate to counteract the dangers of the Victorian blind faith—another by-product of awe and reverence, and inspired at exactly the right time—so has it been with knowledge of the Deva-evolution.

But apart from this, it was not possible that music itself should undergo a sudden transformation at the hands of its exponents. For Grieg or Tschaikowsky to have conceived of an entirely new music would be contrary to the laws which govern inspirational receptivity. However much an Initiate or Deva might wish to impress a *totally* and consistently novel combination of ideas upon one of His "mediums," the latter would be incapable of receiving it ; for one thing, it would be contrary to all his previous musical notions, for another he would not have the necessary technique at his disposal to transmit it. Therefore, musical evolution, just as every other kind of evolution, must be a gradual process, in view both of its composers and its listeners. Hitherto, even the most advanced Deva-exponents have only been able to "bring through"

a small portion of that music, and that is why the hyper-moderns sound to us so discordant—they have assimilated some of the discords, but have not learnt how to resolve them. Moreover, they have still to “bring through” the melodic side of the Deva-music; for, not having as yet sensed this, many of them, in their endeavours to avoid the obvious, banish melody from their compositions altogether. It should also be stated that the necessary instruments for the perfect interpretation of this music have yet to be invented.

Thus, in reviewing the whole trend of that art which had its first tentative beginnings with Grieg and Tschai-kowsky, all the foregoing must be taken into consideration.

The next progressive step from the human to the Deva-music is to be found in the works of Frederick Delius: for he has undoubtedly contacted much of the *atmosphere* of the nature-spirit evolution. If we compare his art with that of his predecessors, we find it appreciably softer, mellower and more subtle; it is also essentially refined. Delius, like all other individualists, developed his style through a selective process—he assimilated certain phases of Grieg, of Debussy and Wagner, and made them his own. He is the poet of *atmosphere*, of the peace-fragranced spirit of the woods, of the freedom of the “cloud-kissing hill,” and of the hazy sun-bathed landscape. The folk-song has also played its part in his development, as it did in that of Grieg, for in the folk-song he finds that closer communion with Nature which aids his creativeness. But, near to the spirit of Nature as he approaches, he has seldom caught the joyous side, the tireless exuberance of the nature-spirit or the joyous grandeur of the higher Devas. When he becomes strong, he seems to lose that subtlety which is so pronounced a feature of the Deva-world. There is, in fact, a *Steigerung*¹ in his *Song of the High Hills*—rather suggestive

¹ *I.e.*, working up.

of a part of the *Tannhäuser* overture—which is too human to be “in the picture.” This may, of course, be consistent with his intentions, and is perhaps only unpleasantly noticeable when regarded from the particular point of view under consideration ; in any case, it shows, together with other passages, that his music is still in a transition stage between the two worlds.

CHAPTER XVI

DEBUSSY AND RAVEL

WHEN Beethoven wrote his Pastoral Symphony, although he may have portrayed the feelings of humans *towards* Nature, he never echoed the music of Nature itself—for, after all, the call of one irrepressible cuckoo does not make a rural poem, nor does a tympani-roll which was intended to depict a thunderstorm. The introduction of these flagrant insignia of Nature, in fact, merely suggest the naïve ; they conjure up a child with a pencil whose one idea of drawing a man is to give him a beard. But the propitious time for Nature-music had not arrived, and, even so, Beethoven could never have composed it—he lacked the essential subtlety.

Those who listen to the piping of the birds, to the murmur of the breeze among the foliage, to the laughter of the pebble-studded stream, and try to catch their elusive harmonies, must realise that the keynote to Nature's music is its extreme subtlety. All is enchantingly indefinite, between the notes, varied, yet in a sense charmingly monotonous. If the birds were actually to sing tunes, they would pall upon us like the cuckoo and destroy all their poetry—tunes soon become commonplace, but never the song of the thrush or blackbird ; it always eludes us, and that is why we love it.

If one thinks of the opening phrase of Debussy's *L'Après-midi d'un Faune*, this same subtlety is noticeable ; all is subdued, delicate, nebulous—for Debussy was the first composer to turn entirely from the human and write

Nature-music pure and simple. It was his mission to begin at the first rung of the devaic evolutionary ladder, and echo the music of the gnomes and fairies, the spirits in the water and the spirits in the clouds. Hence he was instinctively compelled to write tone-poems bearing such titles as *Nuages*, *La Mer*, *Jardins sous la Pluie*, *Reflets dans l'eau*, and so forth. It is true that he stepped into fame with an opera composed to Maeterlinck's *Pelléas et Mélisande*, but it was the remoteness of this play which attracted him, not its humanity. Hence the result was an anomaly—nature-spirit music to a drama of human jealousy is out of place, and that is why his opera is not altogether satisfying ; it is too attenuated and diaphanous, and there comes a moment when one begins to feel that it is too long. But then nature-spirit music is not suited to opera at all, unless the subject be a fairy-tale or culled from Mythology ; for the nature-spirits know no passions nor sorrows, nor have they any moral sense as we understand it ; *joie de vivre* is their most prominent characteristic. They sing, they dance, they bathe in the sun or moonbeams, they love to mould the clouds into countless different shapes, they love to play pranks and transform themselves into various semblances, just as children love to “dress up.” In fact, they are very similar to children, and have a special partiality for them, and will often play with those who are psychically disposed. The parental wiseacres, of course, when their offspring relate of the games they have had with fairies, think that it is all imagination ; but this is not so, in that the young are very often gifted with psychic vision, though they as often lose their gifts when they grow up. Being told that it is all nonsense, they suppress those natural faculties, which, in consequence, atrophy.

We need not go into elaborate details relative to Debussy's work ; it has sufficed to show its similitude to the subtle music of Nature, yet only those who possess

clairaudience will realise *how* great that similitude. For what may be heard with the physical ear—the sighing of the breeze, the laughter of the brook—is but the outer manifestation of Nature’s minstrelsy ; there is an inner song made by every movement of the leaves, of the butterflies’ wings, of even the flower-petals as they open to the kiss of the sun. And it is this which Debussy has reproduced as far as it has been possible with our present-day instruments.

Nevertheless, without great elaboration, a word should be said about his remarkable harmonic inventiveness : for with his advent an almost entirely new world of harmony was revealed to us. It was not, however, a greatly discordant world despite its novelty—with the exception of such pieces as *La Cathédrale Égloutie* Debussy contrived to be new without being intensely harsh ; his discords were more subtle than ear-splitting. They may have fallen strangely on the aural senses of 1902, when *Pelléas* was first produced, but they cannot compare in actual harshness with those of Schönberg or Bartok. The reason is that (1) Debussy was concerned with depicting the music of the earth-plane, which, being near to us, is more familiar than that of the remoter planes—remoter only in a sense, of course, since they interpenetrate the physical ; and (2) that he reproduced much more of that music in its entirety than have the later composers reproduced of the music of the Emotional Plane. In a word, his music is more complete than that of his followers. But none the less, it has its limitations, as Debussy himself was the first to admit. “I have come to the end of my tether,” he said in effect to a fellow composer. “My message is not an extended one ; I seem to have exhausted its possibilities and can’t branch out in other directions.” Did he perhaps feel intuitively that his life was drawing to a close ? It may be so, for he said this just before he developed that malady which resulted in his death.

But he was not left without an heir—musically speaking—to elaborate his mission and widen his influence. This is not to say that Maurice Ravel is in any sense a “copy” of Debussy, but rather an extension of him, as Strauss is in some respects an extension of Wagner, as previously stated. Ravel, in fact, constitutes the bridge between the music of the nature-spirits and that of the lesser Devas—those who inhabit the Emotional Plane; for he oscillates, as it were, between the unseen denizens of the physical and those of that higher plane; he is a necessary step to Scriabin’s message. With Ravel the discordant element is more pronounced than with his predecessor; at the same time his form is more elaborate, as witness the Trio for piano, violin and ’cello. He also took upon himself—unconsciously, no doubt—that high mission of showing the beautiful in the ugly, not relative to the human realm as did Moussorgsky,¹ but to the realm of Nature. *Le Gibet* is one of the most characteristic pieces in this field of endeavour, though, in order to assimilate its message, we must listen to it with our feelings, so to say, and not with our mind. For it must be admitted that there is a depth of beauty in the ugly side of Nature—if we could only see the latter in its completeness. As soon as a bird, a field-mouse or a mole dies, instead of its body being left to putrefy, Dame Nature has endowed the little Necrophori beetles with an instinct which impels them to hurry to the spot and bury the corpse, leaving but a mound of earth to show its grave. In the Hindu religion this aspect of Nature is personified by Shiva, the second Person of the Trinity, who is at once the Destroyer and Purifier; and although He *appears* to be maleficent, He is in reality good, for His function is to destroy evil, not to create it. When Baudelaire wrote that to many people disgusting poem, “The Corpse,” it was this Shiva-aspect of Nature which inspired him, and

¹ See Chapter XIX.

likewise inspired Ravel to compose *Le Gibet*. Moreover, as Shiva destroys, so does Shiva-inspired music, as we shall presently see when we study the ultra-modern composers.

Like Debussy, Ravel embarked on an opera with a very human subject : the music of *L'Heure Espagnole* is non-human nevertheless, and is even more of an anomaly than that of *Pelléas*. If its plot bears any resemblance whatever to the nature-spirit world, it is solely in that complete absence of conventional moral sense which its characters exhibit ; in all other respects there is none. The Higher Powers, however, do not dictate to their "mediums" the choice of *libretti* ; they are content to inspire the music, though, of course, were Ravel a conscious occultist, or like Wagner or Scriabin aiming at some philosophical message, he would have co-ordinated the two. As it is, his intuition only at times plays him false, seeing that for the most part it guides him to select apt superscriptions for the majority of his pieces. Only a nature-spirit tone-poet would think of such a title as *Undines*, and only a nature-lover would hit on the fantastic idea of setting natural history to music.

Since Debussy and Ravel have spread abroad their influence, a perceptible change in the attitude towards the "Unseen" has taken place. Popular magazines have printed articles dealing with the subject of Fairies as possible objective realities and not merely as figments of the imagination ; the interest in folk-lore has widely increased, savants having published books on the folk-lore of the various countries. Spiritism is obtaining a greater hold on the nation, and the works of the Rev. Vale Owen have had a large circulation. Moreover, the number of people with psychic perception is increasing, and instead of being scoffed at as visionaries, their assertions are taken with a degree of seriousness which thirty years ago would not have been accorded them. The same may be said

relative to automatic and inspirational writing, which are much *en évidence* at present, and also instances of drawing and painting *under control* are becoming more and more frequent. In a word, the chasm between the seen and the unseen is growing ever narrower—Man has begun to *know* instead of merely to believe.

CHAPTER XVII

SCRIABIN, THE GREATEST DEVA-EXPONENT

IT is not altogether strange that Scriabin's early compositions should have been intensely Chopinesque in character, for refinement and subtlety are closely allied. Thus his predilection for the idiom of Chopin was based on psychological reasons rather than on musical ones; from an ultra-refinement, and hence subtilising of the human element, Scriabin passed into the non-human, and so ultimately became the greatest exponent of Deva-music that so far has been born. He was also the first European composer who combined a conscious knowledge of occultism with the tonal art. Scriabin knew that he had a spiritual message to convey to the world, and that through music it could be given; he did not believe in *l'art pour l'art*; such a conception failed to appeal to his mystic temperament; he wanted to benefit the human race, and it was this aspiration which impelled him to confess that the day on which his *chef d'œuvre* could be produced, would be the happiest in his life.

This *chef d'œuvre* was to be called a *Misterium*, and at its perfecting Scriabin had aimed during the last fifteen years of his all too short existence on earth. Not only was it calculated to express the composer's spiritual ideas, but to have an actually spiritualising effect on its listeners. Further, "it was to have been delivered in the form of a service that would consist of a combined and simultaneous appeal to the senses by all the arts"¹—a magnificent

¹ See M. Montagu-Nathan, "Contemporary Russian Composers," Chapter III.

scheme, indeed, if realisable—but unfortunately death overtook the composer before its completion. Did the Powers of Evil begin to “walk in awe of this mortal” and to fear his influence, as M. Montagu-Nathan suggests, or was it that the time was not ripe for so exalted a revelation? Certainly it seems strange that all the efforts of the doctors to prevent a carbuncle from proving fatal should have been unavailing, and that in consequence Scriabin died at forty-four years of age, with his greatest work unaccomplished.

In 1910, *Prometheus* or the *Poem of Fire* was completed, and it is undoubtedly the most mature of the composer's works. Scriabin had already discovered that harmonic system which is pre-eminently devaic in character, and in this work he put it to the fullest use. The effect is one of almost continuous *false relation*, i.e., “the occurrence of chromatic contradiction in different parts” played simultaneously. And yet only through this device, which caused the pedagogues of an earlier period to shudder with righteous indignation, is it possible to obtain that sense of “between the notes” which is essential to the portrayal of Deva-music. True, Mr. Foulds in his *World Requiem* attempted to simulate that music with the employment of quarter-tones, but not altogether successfully, since the effect rather gave rise to the idea that the orchestra was playing out of tune. But then, as Initiates who can see into the future have pointed out, special instruments are necessary for quarter-tone effects, and the day has not yet arrived for their invention. In the meantime, the possibilities of *false relation* are far from being exhausted, as witness the free use of it made by every noteworthy composer of the present day.

The devaic quality of Scriabin's music, however, is not only to be traced in his harmonic scheme, but in that exuberance and ecstasy which colour nearly the whole of his *Prometheus* score. It is an entirely different type of

ecstatic element from that produced by Wagner—all sense of the obvious and the diatonic is banished, and with it all sense of the human. It exhales an intense loveliness, but not an earthly loveliness ; it reaches a climax expressive of unutterable grandeur, but it is a grandeur incomparable with anything we have seen or experienced on earth. It is the grandeur of mighty Beings, flashing forth Their unimaginable colours and filling the vast expanses with Their song. It was because Scriabin was inspired so forcibly to express the Deva-evolution that he felt the necessity for employing the “ keyboard of light ” in conjunction with the orchestra ; his intense predilection for trills arose from the same cause. Those endowed with a sufficiently high type of clairvoyance to see the Devas on the more rarefied planes tell us that they scintillate with the most superb colours. The colours of earth, with the exception of those produced by fire or those in the sunset, are dead ; but on the higher planes all are vibrant and alive. Moreover, colour, music, perfume, are all synthesised and not apportioned to different senses as in the material world. Thus when Scriabin aimed at a synthesis of all the arts, he was attempting to demonstrate that Law of Correspondences—“ as above, so below.”

It should be understood that Scriabin was in touch with a higher stage of the Deva-evolution than was Debussy. Exquisite as are the latter's compositions they do not approach either the ecstasy or the grandeur expressed by those of Scriabin. Debussy and Ravel are, as already stated, nature-spirit exponents ; Scriabin, however, soared higher and contacted, as it were, the Devas of the “ heaven-world ” or what is called the “ Summerland ” by the spiritists. His whole range was a more extended one, though he never reached the plane of Unity, where Deva and Human become one. It is owing to this that his music seldom touches the heart—there is something impersonal about it, with all its ecstasy. Yet it does not

leave us cold ; on the contrary, it stirs us vitally, but it awakens emotions which are less translatable into words than those evoked by any previous composer. Could it be otherwise, seeing that as yet the majority of us do not even dimly understand that vast scheme of which it relates ?

CHAPTER XVIII

THE HYPER-MODERNS AND THEIR EFFECTS

To understand the influence of those composers who have loosely been termed Futurists, it is necessary that we should once again concern ourselves with the hidden side of Nature. We are aware that in so doing we shall in this particular instance more than ever provoke the incredulity of a certain class of readers, but this is unavoidable—the “mangling tooth of criticism” only disconcerts those whose vanity is greater than their love of what they believe to be truth.

It is unfortunately a fact that intense and continued passiona! emotions, especially mob-emotions, create a variety of thought-forms in the lower of the unseen¹ planes, and that these thought-forms endure for a number of years, until destroyed by some specific agency. That they are “unseen,” however, does not render them innocuous ; on the contrary, like equally unseen but deadly gases, they exercise a most malignant effect upon all those who are not strong enough to resist them. As the man with impure blood and an unhealthy physical body is an easy prey to germs, so the man with an “unhealthy,” disorganised and uncontrolled *emotional* body is an easy prey to such thought-forms : they attack him, as it were, in his weakest spot, and so produce an acute or chronic moral or physical disease. Looked at clairvoyantly, they often appear as a dense miasmatic vapour with

¹ Unseen only to normal vision, but not so to the trained vision of Adepts Initiates, seers and sorcerers.

tentacles reaching out in all directions, ready at any moment to pounce on the unwary and inject their poison into his emotional organism.

In the Middle Ages these *thought-forms* were, in part, responsible for the many and varied manifestations of cruelty mentioned in the chronicles of that period. That they obsessed some of the inquisitors, for instance (though, as we shall show later, they were not the cause of the Inquisition itself), we have reason to believe. After the Reformation, these thought-forms played their part in inciting the various sects to persecute one another and resort to violent measures in order to suppress so-called heresy. At a still later period they inspired the cruelty and bloodshed coincident with the French Revolution. Further, they were responsible for the Congo atrocities, the atrocities in the Great War, in the Russian Revolution, and in the recent revolt in Ireland. Indeed, if we study world-history, we shall find that at every period, somewhere or other, acts of quite unnecessary violence and cruelty have been perpetrated. For these thought-forms merely shift their field of action from one people, one country, to another: the focus for their attack being always some emotional stir-up. It must be understood, however, that thought-forms *in themselves* are not possessed of any great motive-force, but that they attract the Powers of Evil and their agents, who utilise them for their own purposes; thus humanity itself, by wrong thinking, forges the weapon which those Powers may wield to its own detriment.

Now it should be noted that nearly all the music we have hitherto examined in this enquiry has been educative, but *not* destructive. By elevating those egos not too debased or primitive to respond to its vibrations it has served, in general, to make them immune to the obsession of cruelty and other undesirable attributes. But there are none the less a vast number of egos, especially among

the proletariat, who, under certain emotional conditions, are liable to such obsession, and will continue to be so until those obsessing forms are once and for all destroyed. The specific type of music essential to their destruction, however, only began to come into existence some twenty years ago, and is only now being disseminated—it is the music of the ultra-discordant type. For it is an occult musical fact that discord (used in its moral sense) can alone be destroyed *by* discord, the reason for this being that the vibrations of intrinsically beautiful music are too rarefied to touch the comparatively coarse vibrations of all that pertains to a much lower plane. No more than a mass of slime in a stagnant pool can be affected by the blue haze of a summer's morn, can those turgid thought-forms be affected by the strains of purely concordant music.

Of course the question may here be asked: "Why did not the Higher Powers inspire the essential species of music centuries ago—surely, if discord is all that was needed, it could have been 'put through' immediately after, say, the Gladiatorial Games?"¹ But the answer to this is that mere discord in itself will not produce the desired result—it must perforce be a special type of discord, which can only be engendered by the musical material at our disposal in this the twentieth century. The dissonances produced by "a few sorry pipes" would have been quite powerless to destroy those mighty thought-forms: one might as well attempt to destroy the effluvia of a cesspool by lighting a joss-stick over it.

Thus the work of destroying these noisome moral germs has been allotted to Stravinsky, Schönberg and other ultra-modernists, who by their dissonances offend the ears of our musical pedagogues. Yet the former are not merely spraying the lower planes with their musical carbohc, if the phrase be pardoned, they are performing a multiple task. Being, like Scriabin, Deva-exponents,

¹ See Chapter XXV.

though not in such a specific sense, they, too, are bringing the Unseen nearer to the Seen, and, in addition, they are helping to break down that conventional thinking which is the greatest obstacle to spiritual progress.¹ Although conventionality was indispensable as a means of establishing law and order after the Restoration, it has now served its purpose ; and just as Handel was "used" by the Initiates to produce it, the hyper-moderns are being likewise "used" to abolish it. Their dissonances, attacking the hard outlines of the *mental bodies* of pharisaical people, render them more pliant and so receptive to new ideas. The people in question, of course, instinctively rebel, and can find no adjectives expressive enough to denounce this music which, unbeknown to them, is thus operating upon their mentalities, but that does not militate against the effect, for, as we have said more than once, the advantage of music is that it touches the subconscious.

But the hyper-moderns are not only breaking down conventionality—they are also breaking down disease. As there exist *thought-forms* productive of moral diseases, there likewise exist *thought-forms* productive of physical diseases, and these can only be exterminated by attacking the cause—it is useless merely to treat symptoms.

We have previously stated that many distressing maladies originate in the *subtler bodies*, and we may here mention two in particular—epilepsy and cancer. Trained seers, looking at a cancer-patient, can actually see the crab-like parasite which attaches itself to the *subtler bodies* and performs its deadly work.² Why is it that although the surgeon may operate to remove the cancer it frequently forms again ? It is because no surgeon's lancet can remove the parasite from the *subtler body*—therefore with all his skill, he has merely operated on an

¹ As Jesus said : " The harlot is nearer to the kingdom of Heaven than the Pharisee "—viz., the symbol of all that is conventional.

² As a matter of fact, it is visible in the *subtler bodies* before it appears in the physical.

effect, and failed to touch the *cause*. Moreover, as long as the medical faculty does not enlarge its field of research, it will never discover a permanent cure for cancer ; and the same may be said of the most frequent forms of epilepsy. This latter is a question of intermittent obsession, the only rational treatment being to sever the link between the obsessing agent ¹ and the person obsessed. That link can, as goes without saying, be destroyed by annihilating the obsessing agent itself, or by so treating the subtler bodies of the patient as to render them immune to all such attacks. This can be accomplished individually through occult spiritual means (with which it is not our province to deal in this book), but on a more general scale it is being achieved through the discordant music of the present day. The process is naturally a slow one, since forms that have existed for numbers of years cannot be destroyed within a short space of time. Also, we have to consider that performances of works by Stravinsky and other hyper-modern composers are comparatively rare and localised occurrences—many people will say *fortunately*—yet if they realised what a beneficial influence in disguise these composers were exercising, they might feel more kindly towards their “ear-splitting discords.”

We do not propose to write a discursive study of the so-called “Futurists” who comprise a vast number of eminent men, including Russians, Germans, Italians, Frenchmen and Englishmen—Goossens and Lord Berners being the most representative of our own compatriots. A few remarks, however, relative to their use of irregular rhythms should be put forward.

It is not without significance that more than twenty years ago Mr. Percy Grainger, then a student in Germany, came to the conclusion that in order to express himself it would be necessary for him to break away from stereotyped

¹ In the New Testament this agent is described as an “evil spirit.”

rhythms and write in what—unless our memory errs—he termed “musical prose.” He believed, in fact, that he had invented this new method of musical self-expression, and it only remained for him to invent a corresponding mechanical device by which it could be conveyed to the public : for the difficulty was to conduct orchestral music written in such a way that every bar differed in time-value. This device has been mentioned in another book,¹ the point which concerns us here being that Scriabin, quite independently of Grainger, must have also come to the conclusion that regularised rhythm imposed a limitation on modern musical expressiveness, and, therefore, had as far as was practical to be abolished. But although the exoteric reason for this was as just mentioned, the esoteric reason is that irregular rhythm acts as a destroying force, hence it is of the utmost importance in breaking down *thought-forms*. To this end the moderns were “impressed” to employ it, and those who were sufficiently sensitive to receive the idea from the Higher Powers, immediately began to introduce it into their music. That it pertains to that Shiva-aspect of Nature already alluded to while dealing with Ravel, is obvious, but it is also connected with a certain phase of Deva-music, and that is why it constituted a feature of Scriabin’s message. Irregular rhythm gives subtlety to melodic phrases, it permits of novel melodic invention, and, therefore, it is an absolutely essential tool in the hands of all would-be Deva-exponents, not to speak of those who would destroy malignant *thought-forms*.

In conclusion, we may repeat what has been stated elsewhere, that the very discordant quality of the hyper-modern music—although it serves a definite purpose—is due to the fact that its composers have only been enabled to “sense” a part of the Deva-music, and consequently do not as yet know *how* to resolve their discords in

¹ See “My Years of Indiscretion,” Mills and Boon.

the true devaic manner. Some of them, owing to this ignorance, relapse into banality, others into mere cacophony ; again, some eschew melody altogether, others write an occasional melody which is quite out of the picture, by reason of their having missed the devaic character. Thus modern music is in a transition stage, and we still await the time when concord and discord shall be united in perfect euphony.

CHAPTER XIX

MOUSSORGSKY : AND THE SUBLIMATION OF UGLINESS

MODESTE PETROVICH MOUSSORGSKY was born in 1839 and died in 1881, but as his mission and influence will be the more easily comprehensible now that we have studied "the hidden side of things," deference to chronological order has been sacrificed to expediency.

Moussorgsky was a man who held very distinct views, and pronounced the laudable dictum that "musicians should not base their art on the laws of the past, but on the needs of the future."¹ And although he was acquainted with those laws, he composed as he felt—"unhampered by the traditions which become second nature to the schooled musician."² His mode of life seems to have been likewise unhampered by the traditions of conduct, for it was so unregulated that he died from the results of sheer dissipation, having first alienated himself on that account from all his friends. Yet, as we shall see, his character and mode of life were intimately connected with his mission; he was the Baudelaire of music, destined to poeticalise the ugly and the morbid; he was equally the Zola of music, portraying the sordid aspects of life.

Those who have had the patience to follow our enquiry thus far, will need no detailed analysis of Moussorgsky's

¹ See M. Montagu-Nathan, "An Introduction to Russian Music."

² *Ibid.*

art to realise the truth of what has just been stated ; they have but to listen to some of his strange songs, and to parts of *Boris Godounof*. But even so, they may not realise the full significance from a spiritual evolutionary point of view of thus portraying squalor and sordidness in music. If, however, we imagine for a moment the consciousness of the perfected Man, we must realise that one of the factors in that consciousness is the power to see beauty in everything. As he who can only love his friends and kindred has not acquired the true unconditional Love-consciousness expressed in the maxim, "*Love thy neighbour as thyself*," so he who can only perceive beauty in the *obviously* beautiful has not attained the *true* perception of Beauty. The soul that would evolve must evolve in all directions, and in order to reach the highest, must not shirk the lowest ; he must in the proverbial phrase, "go through hell to find heaven." It was this spiritually educative aspect of Moussorgsky's music which inspired that school of painters whose *métier* is the sublimation of ugliness. In fact, there is nowadays hardly a modern painter of any repute who portrays the palpably beautiful. Since Gauguin and Van Gogh, to mention only two, appeared in the field, sombre colouring, the portraiture of ugly women, the representation of the so-called coarse, of the smoke-begrimed and the squalid side of life : all these have become the subject-matter of pictorial art.

But Moussorgsky's music had yet other effects. By bringing home to the hearts of the Russian people the squalor and misery of their existence, and at the same time with his discords breaking down conventional thinking, he ultimately helped to arouse that hatred of bondage which resulted in the Revolution. Thus he inspired *Individualism*, not as Wagner had done through spiritual means—Right for Right's sake—the soul coming into its own, but through purely human means. To the more

evolved soul, including that of the artist and the writer, he showed the beauty in squalor ; to the " man in the street " he showed the misery of it, and implanted within him the longing to be free.

We are aware that a seeming paradox is here involved, but one need only turn to the Bible to perceive that all spiritual science is replete with paradox¹—it cannot be otherwise while human beings are at different stages of evolution. The self-same sunshine which dries the mud, causes the sweetness of the summer fruit—such is the law, for Nature is economical with her powers. Again, the same agent which gives life to one, gives death to another : does not the sun spell life to the flowers and death to noisome germs ? And so again we see the Law of Correspondences—as in Music, so in Life.

Nevertheless to Moussorgsky alone we must not look for those causes which brought about the Revolution : other notable Russian composers added their quota. If we examine the characteristics of nearly all Russian music, we find insistence of rhythm one of the most pronounced. Now very marked rhythm, by reason of its power to " rouse up," to energise, gives to man *enthusiasm*, spirit, courage, audacity. Alone to exhibit the sordidness of life, as Moussorgsky did, would not have eventuated in a revolution ; we may draw a man's attention to the misery of his surroundings, but unless by one means or another we can fire him with enthusiasm and daring, nothing practical is achieved. The folk-dance music had already done much to imbue the Russians with boldness and patriotism, but it was the Ballet with all its enthusiasm-creating rhythms and tone-colour which finally put the torch to a long smouldering fire and endowed at any rate the leaders of the revolution with the essentials to set it in motion. That it would have been less cruel if the music

¹ For instance, " *He who would save his life must lose it.*"

of the ultra-discordant composers could have had time to take effect, we do not doubt. On the other hand, the Russian Revolution cannot be regarded as an unmitigated evil if we look at the whole evolutionary scheme and not at an isolated fragment of it.

CHAPTER XX

POPULAR MUSIC AND ITS VARIOUS EFFECTS

THE ITALIAN MELODISTS

THOUGH some Italian enthusiasts refer to the works of Donizetti, Rossini and Bellini as "great Italian master-pieces," we nevertheless include them in the category of popular music, and even those of Verdi may be added. The truth is that the ultra-melodious music of these composers possesses those particular properties which invariably "bring down the house," whatever sort of an audience may be seated therein. We admit that professional musicians—unless they be singers—do not for choice find themselves among that audience, but then professional musicians are fastidious in their tastes.

All the same, this totally unsubtle Italian melodiousness of which the four composers mentioned were notable exponents, has not been without its effects, especially upon the Italians themselves. Sequential and conventional melody, coupled with obvious rhythms, tends to keep a certain poise and balance by awakening pleasant emotions. It is melody which has sustained that light-heartedness so evident in the Italian people ; it is again melody which has prevented a serious and acrimonious revolution in Italy. Those influences in Wagner and Strauss which make for Freedom and Individualism, and hence inspire revolutions, have been partly counteracted by the music of Donizetti, Bellini, etc. ; they have, in fact, kept the Italians in a good temper. They have also, in con-

junction with Mozart, had a similar effect upon the English. Nor must we forget the name of Puccini in this connection, for his sprinkling of modernity has been just sufficient to render his music palatable to those who have come to demand more than a mere melody attached to a stereotyped accompaniment. But it is his melodiousness, none the less, which has rendered him so pre-eminently popular, and his popularity has been well-timed in an age when social upheavals may so easily lead to bloodshed. The same may be said of the popularity of Mascagni and Leoncavallo.

We may here cite a portion of the poetical phrase of an Initiate to the effect that Melody is the cry of Man to God.¹ And although on the surface there may seem little connection between thus expressing one's feelings to the Deity, and that light-heartedness and good temper we have ascribed to the effects of melody, if we look deeper we shall find them very closely related. Religious persons are familiar with the salubrious effects of prayer, and also of those of confession, whether to a friend, to a priest or to God Himself—these effects being a feeling of relief, of an easing of the mind, of a release from some mental or emotional burden ; a theme we have already elaborated in connection with Beethoven. It will therefore become apparent—even without reverting to psycho-analysis which has reduced this practice to a science—that persons who are constantly getting rid of their pent-up feelings must experience a light-heartedness and a freedom from useless worry unknown to their more repressed brethren. We have been none the less inclined to confound effect with cause, and, in the case of the Italians, at any rate, to have thought that they sing all day long *because* they are so light-hearted. Yet the reverse is the truth, or, better said, was the truth at one time. They *are* so light-hearted because for many generations they have thus

¹ See Chapter XXI., The Origin of Music.

sung to themselves and eased their souls. And much the same applies to the Austrians who, if they do not actually sing to themselves, are much addicted to strumming light airs—the airs of the typical *Wiener Walzer* or the latest operetta. The Austrians, in fact, are lovers of ultra-melodious music, and their musical gods, so far as the “classics” are concerned, are Mozart and Schubert. The result is a light-heartedness and love of gaiety, and an absence of acrimonious feelings patent to all who come in contact with them. During the War they showed a most laudable lack of bitterness, so that even in adversity their customary good temper was retained.

ENGLISH “BALLADS”

The pieces of music which come under the above heading are not to be confounded with such classical specimens as “Chevy Chase” or “Adam Bell”—indeed, strictly speaking, they are not ballads at all, they are simply songs. According to the writer in Grove’s “Dictionary,” the word “ballad,” as we here employ it, “implies a composition of the slightest possible degree of musical value, nearly always set to three verses . . . of conventional doggerel.” He then goes on to state that “ballad concerts are promoted for the purpose of bringing “such things” before the notice of the public—to which he might have added “in Great Britain,” seeing that in no other country in the world are these concerts an institution.

Yet inartistic as these ballads and also the means employed for their exploitation happen to be, they had at one time their uses, namely, during that Victorian Age in which they played so large a part. With their sloppy sentimentality, they counteracted the hardness of the Victorian people, and even, strange though it may sound, the hardness of the Victorian furniture. At a period

when everything was subservient to DUTY, when awe and reverence had sunk into the blood and bones of the nation, they inspired a modicum of a particular kind of sympathy. It was that kind which, as a great concession, permits a slight note of frivolity in otherwise austere surroundings ; that kind, for instance, which allows children to play a game on Sundays, provided it be in some way connected with religion. There were, in fact, such games, and the author himself remembers one based on Bunyan's " Pilgrim's Progress," in which there was a large chart with pictures and numbers. It was played with dice, and the thrower who was fortunate enough to get the highest number and so reach the Pilgrim's objective, won the game. This slight concession transferred to the plane of furniture, was answerable for the Japanese fans, the wax flowers and other knick-knacks, all of which introduced that mild note of frivolity already mentioned.

The ballads, however, have now served their purpose, and we think are being gradually ousted from the public taste by the creations of Mr. Roger Quilter, who possesses a genius for true song-writing, and by those of other English composers. It may be added that all songs which are *genuine* songs and not a species of *recitative* superimposed upon an accompaniment, tend to inspire sympathy, give poise and balance, and sustain the gentler side of life. In the case of Roger Quilter's works, by their touch of the devaic element they arouse sympathy and love for the beauties of Nature.

STREET MUSIC

Barrel-organs, brass bands, etc., in spite of being public nuisances, are nevertheless a means of beneficially affecting a large number of people. Their place, however, is in the slums, and not in the more well-to-do quarters, though for obvious reasons they do not remain where

their influence would be of greatest value. It is, of course, too much to expect of legislators that they should prohibit two or more barrel-organ grinders from playing within earshot of one another—legislators being ignorant of the “hidden side of music”—but if a law *could* be passed to that effect, the influence of street-music would be much greater than it is. Although discord, as already stated, is destructive to disease and evil passions, it requires to be the right kind of discord, and not that produced by a simultaneous performance of *Santa Lucia* and *Yes, we have no bananas*, with perhaps *The Lost Chord* as a cornet obligato. This, of course, merely jangles the nerves. But when a barrel-organist happens to stand in concordant isolation, the round of tunes that he plays inspire sympathy and a little poise and balance in undisciplined and unevolved egos: they also bring that proverbial “ray of sunshine” into their unfortunate and sordid existences. In a word, they help to educate “the gutter.”

JAZZ

It is regrettable that a type of “music” which is so popular as *Jazz* should exercise an evil influence, but such is the occult truth. Jazz has been definitely “put through” by the Black Brotherhood, known in the Christian Tradition as the Powers of Evil or Darkness, and put through with the intention of inflaming the sexual nature and so diverting mankind from spiritual progress. For the Black Brotherhood, as briefly mentioned in our chapter on “Musicians and the Higher Powers,” are those entities known as the Brothers of the Left-hand Path, who work against the Divine Will, for the attainment of personal power. Reference to them under one name or another will be found in practically all the scriptures of the world.

Since the dissemination of Jazz, a very marked decline

in sexual morals has eventuated, and, in place of control, we find promiscuity. Whereas at one time women were content with decorous flirtations, a vast number of them are now constantly preoccupied with the search for erotic adventures. That moral wiseacres shake their heads and point out that this state of affairs is the inevitable result of freedom, we are aware. But is their conclusion not based on very indifferent reasoning? Freedom *need* no more be associated with lust than with inebriety. Does not George Eliot afford an example of one who believed in freedom? But the fact that she lived with G. H. Lewes for a number of years hardly warrants us in calling her a voluptuary. Indeed, this term can only be applied to persons who blind themselves to the virtue of moderation, and who make, as it were, a hobby of their sexual passion, entirely dissociating it from the elevating influences of love. Now, it is just this lack of moderation, this over-emphasis of the sex-nature, this wrong attitude towards it, for which Jazz-music is responsible. There is an orgiastic element about its syncopated rhythm, entirely divorced from any more exalted musical content, which produces a hyper-excitement of the nerves and loosens the powers of self-control. It gives rise to a false exhilaration, a fictitious endurance, an insatiability resulting in a deleterious *moral* and physical reaction. Whereas the old-fashioned melodious dance-music inspired the gentler sentiments, Jazz, with its array of harsh, ear-splitting percussion-instruments inflames, intoxicates and brutalises, thus for the time being causing a set-back in Man's nature towards the instincts of his racial childhood. For, after all, Jazz very closely resembles the music of primitive savages. A further result of Jazz is to be seen in that love of sensationalism which has so greatly increased within the last few years. As Jazz itself is markedly sensational, the public has come to demand "thrills" in the form of "crook dramas" and plays, the only

dramatic interest of which is connected with crime, mystery and brutality. This also applies to sensational fiction : for the output and sale of this type is prodigious. The widespread and exaggerated interest taken in prize fights is another symptom of sensationalism.

The question may be asked : "Then why have the Higher Powers permitted Jazz to 'come through'?" And although to give an adequate answer would be to embark on a discussion as lengthy as the one involved by the momentous question : "Why does God allow evil?" yet a few hints may be put forward.

From music itself we can select a suitable analogy. If we take two notes out of a chord, say an F and a B, and play them simultaneously, they produce a discord, but if we add the remainder of the notes, the effect is a concord. Similarly, if we can only perceive the isolated parts of a great spiritual scheme, those parts in themselves may appear evil, but in conjunction with the whole they are really good. It was necessary for the spiritual evolution of the race that both men and women should acquire a judicious measure of control, entirely for its own sake, and *not* in view of any other considerations. In the Victorian era, women, being enclosed, so to speak, in the cages of convention, were not free to choose whether they would exercise control or not—they were *compelled* to suppress their passions, or suffer consequences they dared not face. In the present century, however, conditions are so much changed that young people can find opportunities for at any rate a certain degree of sex-gratification—if they so wish—with very little danger of detection. Thus they have the choice whether they will learn the lesson of control or not. Which brings us finally to answer the question why the Higher Powers have permitted the diffusion of Jazz—it is because Jazz-music makes that lesson rather more difficult, and consequently renders the learning of it the more deserving of merit.

PART III
HISTORICAL

CHAPTER XXI

THE BEGINNINGS OF MUSIC AND RELIGION

"Whereas Melody is the cry of Man to God, Harmony is the answer of God to Man."

It requires but little imagination to realise that in primitive Man there must have been desires and yearnings which he could not understand, still less put into words, however much he may have tried. Mere speech was a totally inadequate means of expression ; he needed something more forceful, yet less definite ; he needed an outlet for those strange supplicatory emotions—and he ultimately found it in song. He discovered that when he sang, his petitions in some unaccountable way seemed to have been heard, and so his yearnings were stilled ; he obtained an emotional relief, as a distraught woman obtains relief when she prays to the God of her own religion. It may seem extravagant to say that through music the first conception of God was aroused in the human mind, yet when primitive Man deemed his prayers were heard, he naturally came to conceive of a Being higher than himself—a Being who could watch over him with parental care. Hitherto his conceptions had been entirely phallic ; he had regarded "the portal through which a child enters the world as the actual Giver of life" ; but after he had discovered song, he conceived the idea of the Great Mother, the very first deity to whom he turned for consolation and protection from the evils of his precarious existence.¹

The next stage in the evolution of religion is common

¹ See W. J. Perry, "The Origin of Magic and Religion."

knowledge ; when once the idea of the Great Mother had been formulated, Man fashioned Her image in wood or stone, and carved figures of Her in the caves ; for he felt the need of a concrete object towards which to direct his worship. Finally, having fashioned his idols, he appointed some one to guard them and minister to their supposed needs ; and in this manner the office of priest originated. It was the priests who discovered the *Mantram*, or spell : they found that if certain notes were reiterated, definite emotional results could be obtained and definite powers brought into action.¹ Thus music became associated with ceremonial magic in the very earliest ages of Mankind. These *Mantrams* were committed to memory and handed down by word of mouth from generation to generation. Only much later were they notated.²

One of the effects of the *Mantram* was to increase religious fervour, with the result that men began to sway with their bodies, then to dance and to clap their hands. In the course of time the most elementary form of drum was invented to accentuate the rhythm ; this led to the invention of other instruments and so to the actual birth of music as an art.

We see, then, that from the very beginning, music has always been associated with religion, and that the priests played an important *rôle* in its systematisation and development.³

¹ See following chapter.

² See Notes (3).

³ See Notes (4).

CHAPTER XXII

EFFECTS OF MUSIC ON THE INDIAN PEOPLE

“Wisdom is subtilised, spiritualised knowledge.”

FOR the contents of this chapter relative to Indian music we are indebted to an Indian sage, mystic and musician, in whose integrity we place complete faith. But as this book deals chiefly with European music and its effects, we have made no attempt to do the study of Indian music the justice it deserves ; moreover, there are grave difficulties in the way. Those who wish for more detailed information on the subject are referred to Mr. Fox Strangways’ masterly volume on “The Music of Hindostan.”

If we point out to an Indian that his music lacks variety, he will not understand us—has he not gay music and solemn music and sad music, therefore, what more can be needed ? Moreover, he will argue that he has four divisions to the tone, and we have only two. And, in answer, we will confront him with our enormous orchestras, our pianos, organs and huge choruses : can his few mellow-toned instruments compare with such an array ?

The characteristic of Indian music, then, is not variety but subtlety, seeing that it has quarter-tones ; and it is our purpose to show as briefly as possible the effects of that subtlety on the Indian people.¹

When the music of India had evolved as far as the

¹ See Notes (5).

mantramistic stage (alluded to in the previous chapter), the ancient Indian priests, instead of seeking to develop it further as an art, sought merely to enhance its *mantramistic* value. They were already contemplative by nature, and having discovered that certain sequences of notes produced profound meditation, they experimented with them and subtilised them until they achieved the desired result; that result was *Samâdhi*, or superconscious trance. But although in that state of trance they heard the "music of vision"—if the term be pardoned—they made no effort to translate it into earthly sound, and so develop music as an art, as we in the West have done; they were content that it should remain simply a means of attaining union with the Divine through its power to assist meditation. When man has reached Bliss, what else is there for him to attain or desire? Like the Psalmist, these ancient Indian priests considered that "the fear of the Lord is the beginning of Wisdom, and the knowledge of the Holy One is understanding." The result was the evolving of those exalted systems of religious philosophy which have ever remained as a monument to the greatness of Indian thought. Because the quarter-tone itself was so subtle, it subtilised the mind, in addition to inducing contemplative trance, and the outcome was not merely the acquisition of knowledge, but of Wisdom, for Wisdom is but *subtilised, spiritualised* knowledge.

Nevertheless, it would be incorrect to say that Indian music remained entirely *mantramistic* and trance-inducing; there were yearnings and aspirations in the people themselves which must needs find a vent in melody; there were also purely human passions which evoked suffering and impelled the unphilosophically-minded to pour themselves out in song. But even so, as no instruments capable of expressing fervour, energy or power had been invented, the means at their disposal were limited; hence Indian music has remained largely of the homophonic

restricted type, and finally has ceased to be of intrinsic importance in the national life. An art in which there is little variety, into which comes no novelty of idea, which, in short, does not progress, is apt to fade into insignificance. If music in the West had remained stationary, it, too, would have suffered a similar fate, since it is obvious that unless subtlety is counterbalanced by more virile qualities, the effect will ultimately be degeneration.

Sir James Frazer in his book, "The Golden Bough," has penned the significant sentence : "The musician has done his part as well as the prophet and the thinker in the making of religion." And further : "We cannot doubt that this, the most intimate and affecting of all the arts—*i.e.*, music—has done much to create as well as to express the religious emotions, *thus modifying more or less deeply the fabric of belief to which at first sight it seems only to administer.*" (The italics are ours.) This is equivalent to saying that music largely moulds temperament and character as well as belief—it affects the mind and the emotions. That Indian music affected chiefly the mind, we have endeavoured to show ; furthermore, because it lacked in general those more energising elements of our varied Western music, we find that the people of India lack those elements also. Climate may, of course, be to some extent responsible for this, but a vitalising type of music could have largely modified its influence. Inasmuch as their music lacked variety, lacked energy, lacked power, and, therefore, was one-sided, and, at any rate in comparison to our Western music, restricted and monotonous, so have the Indians themselves as a race remained one-sided, inert and unequally balanced in character. Apart from the warrior caste there are few men of action ; the bulk of the people are dreamy, meditative, and given over in excess to the things of the spirit.

Yet the question will be asked : is one really justified

in attributing the characteristics of a whole nation to *music*? Is that not carrying the assumption too far? Yes, but only if we fail to take into account its *indirect* as well as its direct influence. Let us turn to facts, and even at the risk of repetition elaborate what has been stated in Chapter I.

When we come away from a concert at which the last item on the programme has been something grand and majestic, do we not feel inspired with the longing to perform great and heroic actions? Or, if that is not consistent with our temperament, do we not at least feel within us an added power and vitality? Have we not been stirred in a manner in which hardly any other medium of expression *but* music can stir us? It is true the effect wears off after a while, but the experience is repeated the next time we hear music of a similar kind. And suppose that we are constantly hearing music, day after day, week after week, year after year, will those constantly repeated emotions leave no imprint upon our character, our emotional nature? Then there is the influence of heredity to consider. As the love of music itself is often transmitted from parent to child or grandchild, is it not probable that the effects of that music upon character will also be transmitted? And if that music, as in India, has been passed on through scores of generations, will its effects not have become correspondingly intensified? If we admit this, we shall understand the characteristic lethargy of the Indian people.¹ We shall also realise that if they *are* one-sided, they are mainly suffering from the defects of their qualities. Only the contemplative temperament could have bequeathed to the world such incomparable systems of philosophy.

¹ Nevertheless, since the introduction of Western music into India, a change is noticeable.

CHAPTER XXIII

THE MUSIC AND CHARACTER OF THE ANCIENT EGYPTIANS

"Every faith has its appropriate music, and the difference between the creeds might almost be expressed in musical notation."

FRAZER: "The Golden Bough."

"Religion is a cult of certain of the emotions."

FIELDING HALL: "The Hearts of Men."

WE now come to deal with the effect of music on the Egyptians, and the part it played in their mighty civilisation. For if we have treated of Indian music first in order, it is not because it was the most ancient, but because it was the most subtle: our intention being to proceed from subtle to gross; from the quarter-tone to the third-tone, and finally to the half-tone.

It was the third-tone which characterised the music of Egypt, and so rendered it one degree less subtle than that of India, with the result that instead of working upon the mind, it stopped short at the emotions, because the emotional organism is itself less subtle than the mentality. As, for example, the vibrations produced by the ultra-violet rays are too subtle to affect the organs of human vision, so are the vibrations produced by the quarter-tone too subtle to affect, at any rate directly, the human emotional make-up.¹

Now, as we have already said, when the mind is subtilised, spiritualised, it becomes the instrument of

¹ See Notes (6).

Wisdom. But this is not so when left to function in the normal way, for then it is solely the instrument of knowledge, though only when unhampered and undisturbed by the coarser emotions. Indeed, the latter, if excited and out of control, are hostile to knowledge, for they tarnish, so to say, the reflector of the mind ; on the other hand, when they are calm and controlled, they leave the reasoning faculties in full possession, and the result is common-sense and lucidity of thought.

And it was just this result which the Egyptians achieved with their third-tone : it tended to calm the emotional organism and to purge it of its grosser vibrations. But what is more, it tended in certain circumstances to induce an emotional species of trance.

An examination of ancient religion reveals the fact that schools for the study of Esotericism existed (and still exist) in every civilisation worthy of the name—schools in which the pupil was taught not only to believe in the finer elements of Nature, but actually to know them. In Egypt these esoteric schools were called “The Mysteries,” and in one of their most important ceremonies of initiation, the candidate, with the aid of music and other rites, was precipitated into a trance, from which he emerged with a knowledge of the post-mortem states of existence.¹ Through this trance he learned from actual experience that he was immortal : he had not only visited the higher planes, but also the lowest and most horrible ; he had descended into “hell,” risen again, and ascended into “heaven,” as the Christian creed phrases it—for the latter is but an adaptation of the Egyptian rubric. We must, however, not confound the trance of the Egyptian with that of the Indian sage : the latter was concerned with experiencing spiritual Bliss, the former with acquiring occult knowledge ; the one was a mystic, the other more of a scientist. And not only was he concerned with the

¹ See Notes (7).

gaining of knowledge, but with devising the necessary means to gain it—in a word, he was a magician.¹ Just as the scientist experiments in order to establish the right conditions for the discovery of some scientific fact, so also does the magician : the only difference is that the scientist works with Nature's grosser forces, the magician with her finer ones. It is, indeed, to the Egyptian civilisation that we of the West owe all ceremonial magic—the Christian Mass originated in Egypt, and not in Jerusalem, even though it is said to have been introduced into the Church to commemorate the Last Supper. With its incense and especially its music, it was originally intended to affect the *emotions*, and whether people realise it or not, it still *does*, though nowadays to a lesser extent than at the time of its inception, because the third-tone chant is no longer employed. Like many other things connected with religious ceremonial, it has been forgotten, with the result that priests and parsons at the present time are working with forces they do not understand. Although the clergy of to-day may endeavour to harmonise religion with science to some extent, they do not concern themselves with the actual science of religion, and all it involves.² Except with cults like Theosophy, religion of to-day, instead of being unified with what ought to be its ally, namely, knowledge which is susceptible of proof, is divorced from it. But with the Egyptians this was not the case ; they carried their scientific temperaments into every phase of life, *including* religion. With their music they did the same. In the esoteric schools it was even employed for healing³ ; it being comparatively easy to

¹ See E. Schuré, "The Great Initiates."

² For instance, the Barnes controversy could never have taken place in a religious community where this science of religion was studied. Has the learned Bishop never heard of psychometry, or met a psychometrist, or a really trained seer, that he should maintain that nobody on earth can detect the difference between a consecrated or an unconsecrated wafer ? Evidently not.

³ Physicians are again advocating music for the treatment of mental and nervous diseases.

effect cures with the aid of the emotions.¹ And of this the Egyptian priest was aware ; but *because* the method was employed in esoteric schools, and hence remained secret, it did not become a part of general Egyptological knowledge, and hence is only known to Initiates of certain present-day arcane schools. From one of these Initiates it was revealed to us.

Before we pass from the subject of Esotericism and Magic, two significant facts should be mentioned. Firstly, the Egyptians regarded music itself as having a divine origin ; secondly, they held that harmony and the various instruments had been discovered and invented by the "gods." Thus, according to them, Hermes discovered the principle of concerted voices and sounds, and was the inventor of the lyre and the earliest form of guitar, while to Osiris was attributed the invention of the flute. Nor are these suppositions at variance with the esoteric side of the Egyptian religion : for at one time the so-called gods were men—great Adepts, great King-Initiates who walked the earth and ruled the people. And just because they were so great, they were deified, as the Founder of Christianity has been deified and His disciples canonised. In fact, according to some esoteric writers, Jesus Himself was a great Initiate, the last Great Initiate to appear before the eyes of the world.²

And yet just as—esoterically considered—the masses of to-day may be said to be ignorant of the truth respecting *their* Teacher, so were the masses in Egypt ignorant of the truth respecting their "gods." "Even the priests were not admitted indiscriminately to the honour of initiation . . . the Egyptians neither entrusted the knowledge of the 'Mysteries' to every one, nor degraded the secrets of divine matters by disclosing them to the profane—they

¹ The cures effected at Lourdes to-day are obviously of this type.

² See E. Schuré, "The Great Initiates."

reserved them for the heir-apparent to the throne, and for *such priests* as excelled in virtue and wisdom.”¹

It will be seen then that the conception of the gods of Egypt was *not* merely the outcome of base and ignorant superstitions, but the logical result of knowledge gained through initiation. That in the course of time that knowledge became corrupted and diffused itself, so to say, into superstition, is true, but it did not thus originate. The Egyptian religion in its pure and pristine state was as exalted and philosophical as the Vedic religion; its fundamental doctrine being the Unity of God, and that from God emanated Man, and to Him he would ultimately return.² Thus the Egyptian believed in the immortality of the soul, and consequently he also believed that those “Great Ones” whom he or his ancestors had loved and revered, still lived on, even though they had passed into “higher spheres.” It was no more illogical for him to offer them his tributes or pray to them than for the Roman Catholic to pray to his patron saint: for as the modern spiritualist believes that the spirits of the departed can in certain circumstances guard and console him, so did the ancient Egyptian. But this did not preclude him from accepting the basic doctrine of one God, any more than the fact of a multitude of individuals precludes the Vedic idea of the One Consciousness, the One Self. Nor did it prevent him from dividing God into His attributes—when He would be called the Creator, the Divine Goodness, Wisdom, Power, and so forth. It is true that in order to convey an impression of these abstract ideas to the eye, it was deemed necessary to distinguish them by some fixed representation, hence gods

¹ See Wilkinson, “The Ancient Egyptians,” Chapter V., p. 321. Jesus adopted a similar policy, entrusting disciples with teachings He did not give to the populace.

² As Wordsworth has phrased it:

“With trailing clouds of Glory do we come
From God Who is our home.”

and goddesses multiplied to an extraordinary extent. Yet these figures were never intended to be looked upon as real personages—they were symbols and nothing more.

We need not dwell any longer on the religion of Egypt ; we have attempted to show that it was the outcome of logical, philosophical investigation and thought—of a penetration into Nature's subtler forces, in brief, of Occultism in its higher forms. Unfortunately, however, certain superstitions arose to tarnish its purity ; selfishness crept into its occultism, and the merely relative occult truths were substituted for absolute ones.

It was known that the gross physical body exercised a very mysterious but strong attraction over the departed ego, and that as long as the former remained intact, the link between the two was not severed. Because the Indians recognised this, they burned their dead, so that the "spirit" might be liberated at once. But selfishness impelled the Egyptians to do exactly the reverse ; they sought to preserve the body in order that the spirit might remain in touch with the earth, and consequently *with themselves*. How the idea of mummification first arose—whether to preserve that which had been held in so much honour or for other reasons, we will not here discuss—but, as finally practised, it was a perversion of occult knowledge to personal ends. Indeed, knowledge when divorced from Wisdom and the sense of Unity almost invariably results in selfishness—and through selfishness came the downfall of the Egyptian civilisation.

It remains to be seen why this was the case, and in what way music was connected with that downfall.

Although music plays a great part in our European life, it played an even greater one in that of Egypt ; there seemed to be hardly an activity of the daily round with which it was not associated. Whatever their occupations might be, the Egyptians always worked to the strains of a song ; they sang when they sowed, they sang when they

harvested, the women sang as they wove, and the hosts of men sang as they transported a colossus from the great stone quarries. And their singing was not of the sporadic type which characterises that of the European labourer—it was organised and especially suited to the particular occupation in which they were engaged. There was even somebody to beat time by clapping his hands : for the Egyptians realised that concerted singing facilitated labour, just as martial music encouraged the soldier when he set forth to war. . . . That music played an important rôle in all ritual, at all festivities, banquets, receptions, funerals and religious festivities, we need hardly mention ; what *is* noteworthy is that it was of a far more varied character than the music of India with which we have already dealt. If we consider that there were lyres, guitars, harps of various sizes, flutes, pipes and double pipes, trumpets, cymbals and drums, we realise that a fair volume as well as variety of sound must have been produced. And this being so, there were types of music to calm the emotions and conversely to stir them. Thus the temperament of the Egyptian was, unlike that of the Indian, a balanced one. Owing to the generally soothing effect of the third-tone on his emotional nature, he was neither constantly “in a whirl,” nor yet lethargic and devoid of initiative ; he struck, in fact, the fair medium, just as his music, taken as a whole, struck that fair medium. It even contained to a certain small extent the divine quality—harmony ; and we read—significantly—that the lyre was deemed especially suited to religious ceremonies, because on the lyre could be played—*chords*.

All the same—for we now come to a critical question—if Egyptian music exercised such a beneficial, such a well-rounded effect on character, how came it that selfishness and superstition brought about the downfall of the Egyptian civilisation ? Was its music, notwithstanding its good qualities, directly or indirectly responsible ? And

the answer is a noteworthy one : it was not owing to what Egyptian music possessed, but to what it *lacked*, that Egypt fell. As India had ultimately fallen because it had spiritual Wisdom but not concrete knowledge, so conversely Egypt fell because it had concrete knowledge but not spiritual wisdom.¹ For knowledge gives power, and power all too often engenders *love* of power ; then comes the final step, love of *personal* power—in a word, selfishness with its inevitable consequence, disintegration of the community. When each individual is trying to gain the ascendancy over his neighbour, instead of to co-operate with him, how, indeed, can it be otherwise ? There is nothing in the universe which can remain for long intact when forces of whatever nature are all pulling in different directions. In a word, since Egyptian music was entirely lacking in the wisdom-inspiring aspect, and as its harmonic or divine aspect was too limited to be strongly operative, Egypt went to its doom, as did Greece and Rome after it. As in 1914, the nations of Europe, because they likewise lacked wisdom, prostituted their scientific knowledge and used it for diabolical purposes, so did the Egyptian prostitute his occult knowledge. Moreover, coincident with his ethical decline, his music began to deteriorate, and the small amount of harmony disappeared. Instead of being developed, it was gradually forgotten ; musical taste became lower and lower, and although the third-tone remained, it was used for trivial purposes, just as our own half-tone may be, and often *is* so used. Thus what might have grown to be the finest music in the world dwindled into utter insignificance.

We have stated the prime cause : let us now examine the secondary causes.

The evil began with the priesthood. As already said, many of the priests had at one time been initiated into the

¹ As the words "spiritual wisdom" may sound tautological, the reader is reminded that such attributes as "worldly" or "administrative wisdom" exist.

“Mysteries,” but in the course of years fewer and fewer were found to be worthy of that honour—they were deficient in the essential qualities. Instead of manifesting selflessness, instead of working disinterestedly for humanity, they showed signs of egotism and a liking for power. And, of course, as this increased—it eventually became an intense love of power—their love of beauty, truth and the higher emotions decreased in proportion, together with their love of music—that medium through which those higher emotions were expressed. They grew indifferent and careless of how the sacred music was rendered, and eventually of what standard of music was employed. Thus, as the exalted influence of the sacred music was withdrawn, the character, not only of the priests but of the people, gradually degenerated. With the little knowledge which had filtered through from the “lesser Mysteries,” much of the true significance of which had been forgotten, the priests worked on the minds of the populace “and paralysed their reasoning powers; the result being that the Egyptians gave way to the grossest superstitions which at length excited universal ridicule and contempt.”¹ But, unfortunately, what the historian was content to term “superstition” was in reality of a far more harmful nature: it was the subjugation of occult forces for evil ends; and when a nation resorts to this its doom is inevitable.

¹ See Wilkinson, “The Ancient Egyptians.”

CHAPTER XXIV

THE GREEKS AND THEIR MUSIC

WITH Greece we come to the half-tone and to European music. As the quarter-tone of India worked especially on the mental, and the third-tone of Egypt especially on the emotional, the half-tone of Greece worked especially on the material or physical—a statement we shall explain a little later on. Thus we have passed from subtle to less subtle, and finally to gross : below this music can no longer be termed music, but merely sound or noise.

It must not be assumed that there was no music of any kind in Europe prior to Greece ; music existed to a certain extent in other countries, where it had originated in supplication to the Deity, and had been employed by the priesthood ; but Greece was the first European country to bring it to a state of comparative perfection : it became an art, and in one sense even a science. Cicero states that the Greeks “ considered the arts of singing and playing upon musical instruments a very principal part of learning. . . . Hence Greece became celebrated for skilful musicians ; and, as all persons there studied music, those who attained to no proficiency in it were thought uneducated and unaccomplished.” Nor was the latter reflection a surprising one, seeing the great philosophers and poets had extolled music, and that it was supposed to be of divine origin and presided over by Apollo, the ever young and beautiful god.

Although many phases of Egyptian music were carried

over into Greece, Grecian music cannot be said to have actually originated in Egypt. More correct were it to say that in the course of time the Greeks adopted a large number of Egyptian instruments and elaborated or adjusted them to their modal needs. The flute, for instance, originally Egyptian, had at first only four holes, but later "Diodorus of Thebes in Boeotia added others, and made a lateral opening for the mouth. It was originally of reed, afterwards of bone or ivory." Of other reed instruments there were the single and double pipe, both being quite common in Greece and Egypt, also the *syrix*. As for stringed instruments, there was a variety of lyres, harps and cithars (a species of guitar). Of percussion there was also a fair variety; and it is to Greece that we owe our tambourine with its metal attachments, though the simpler type hailed from Egypt. We need hardly point out that with so much instrumental material, harmony—though of a limited kind—formed a part of Greek music; and to this, combined with the effects of the half-tone, we attribute that admixture of religion and superstition so peculiar to the Greek people.

Having described the instruments of Greece, a few words should be added relative to the Greek scales or *modes*, as they are termed. Of these, the ancient Greeks possessed originally but three, the Dorian, the Phrygian and the Lydian, but subsequently they were increased to seven. If—to explain these modes—our modern scale of C, which *is* the Lydian mode, be played from E to E, the disposition of tones and semi-tones is that of the Dorian; if from D to D, that of the Phrygian.¹ And it is significant that various emotional and ethical effects were attributed by the eminent Greek thinkers to melodies founded on these various modes. The Dorian was said to inspire courage, self-esteem and respect for the law;

¹ The others are the Hypolydian, F to F; the Hypophrygian, G to G; the Hypodorian, A to A; the Mixolydian, B to B.

the Lydian to induce voluptuous feelings; and the Phrygian repose, dignity and self-control. But unfortunately those thinkers—who included Plato and Aristotle—were not all of the same opinion regarding these scales and their effects, the reason being that they overlooked several important factors: the instruments employed, the *tempi*, and so forth. For instance, taking our full list of orchestral instruments and dividing them into four categories, it is, broadly speaking, correct to say that (1) drums and brass affect the physical, (2) reeds the emotional, (3) strings the mental-emotional, (4) harp and organ the spiritual-emotional. Nevertheless, if a certain type of music be played, say, on the brass, and, as naturally follows, played in a certain way, or in conjunction with other instruments taking a subordinate part, the effect may be quite the opposite of a physical one. The same applies to both the reeds and strings, and even to the percussion. Who has not experienced the purely emotional influence of muffled drums, or that of a cymbal struck *pianissimo* with a drum-stick, though when either of these instruments is used in a more vigorous manner, it operates entirely on the physical?

And so when the great men of Hellas ascribed different influences to the various modes, their assertions were not of necessity incorrect, though on the surface they appeared contradictory. Indeed, in connection with many of our own assertions relative to the half-tone and its influence on the physical, we may, like those ancient philosophers, appear to contradict ourselves. It should, therefore, be clearly understood that when we maintain that the semi-tone works directly on the physical, we do not for a moment imply that it has no *indirect* effect on the emotions or the mind. To say that some passage played from *Parsifal*, for example, operates exclusively upon the physical body, were, of course, absurd. The essential truth for the reader to grasp is that as a general tendency

the half-tone affects the physical plane, or, perhaps better expressed, man's attitude to the physical plane. As the conquest of Spirit was the most pronounced feature of the great day of ancient Indian civilisation, the conquest of Matter ¹ has been the most pronounced feature of European civilisation. And this, we contend, is due to the general and increasing effects of the half-tone. When, however, a variety of other factors came by slow degrees to be connected with this our Western division of the scale, Man came to occupy himself once more with "the things of the spirit," but from a different standpoint and motive from those of his Aryan forefathers. But we shall have some way to travel before we reach the musical effects which are associated with this momentous impulse to "return to God," as the mystics have phrased it. For the present, we are concerned with the effects of the half-tone at the time of its inception.

One need only look at the plastic arts of Greece to realise what an important part the *physical* played in Grecian civilisation. It is obvious that the one aim of the painter or the sculptor was to depict physical perfection; it is also obvious that all Greek art was uncoloured by the emotions: it was entirely "thought out," a product of unemotionalised mind. If, for instance, we compare Egyptian paintings with those of Greece, we find as we do with many modern ones, that they are untrue to nature: or, phrased otherwise, they depict nature as seen through the emotions. But of Greek sculpture and painting the very reverse must be said—they were not only true to nature, but, if the paradox be allowed, they were even truer than nature. It was for this reason that Aristotle was impelled to remark: "Even if it is impossible that men should be such as Zeuxis painted them, yet it is better he should paint them so; for the example

¹ Machinery, mechanical appliances, increased means of locomotion, etc.—these are the outward signs of what we have termed the conquest of matter.

ought to excel that for which it is an example." This very word, in fact, gives us the clue to the whole theory of Greek art, namely, the blending of the beautiful and the good—the æsthetic and the ethical.

And how highly significant this educative conception of art—for educative it was—in view of what we have written regarding Greek music. Ethics deal with the regulation of conduct, and conduct is associated with action—that is to say, the physical. When the mind is not disturbed by undesirable emotions, man acts rightly ; for, as we need hardly point out, right thought is the director of right action. It is only when the emotions are at fault, when coloured by jealousy, anger or other evil passions, that man acts wrongly ; for then thought becomes vitiated or even totally in abeyance for the time being. Thus the science of ethics as understood in Greece was neither the product of subtilised thought nor of emotional religious thought, but of pure reasoning in connection with the sphere of action—in a word, the physical. Moreover, as we progress with this study of Greek life, we shall see how nearly every phase of it either started from or was brought down to the physical.

To pass on from art to the exoteric side of religion with which it was so closely interwoven—the religion as understood not by Initiates like Plato and Pythagoras, but by the people. Expressed concisely, this religion was the reduction of the forces of Nature to concrete personalities ; it was even more : it was the reduction of human passions to concrete personalities. In order to explain natural phenomena, the ancient Greek posited beings or spirits resembling himself, but mightier than himself ; to explain emotional phenomena he did likewise. When he saw the storm approaching across the darkened sea, he saw with his mind's eye spirits who caused the anger of wind and waves ; and when he felt a storm within himself and the angry billows of passion beating against his heart, he saw

their cause as external to himself—he had permitted the spirits of evil to obsess him. The fault was partly his own, it is true, for he had been weak and failed to resist them as he should have done ; but it was not wholly his own . . . if those evil ones did not exist externally to himself, there *could* be no evil passions at all. In this way had originated the idea of a host of gods and goddesses, of sprites and nymphs, of nereids and dryads, for each phase of nature came to be the habitation of some ethereal being. But be it noted, those beings had a form, however ethereal, similar to that of man himself, and as a proof of this we possess the legacy of Grecian art. The statues of the gods were simply representations of the highest *physical* perfection, they were not symbolic as were the idols of India. Where in Greece can be found such an embodied idea as Shiva, the Destroyer, that third aspect of the Hindu trinity ? Although the Greek gods were by no means morally perfect, not one sculptor thought to portray them other than beautiful—a Greek Shiva would have been regarded in the light of blasphemy.

And now what may be said of the relation of man to the gods ? As Mr. Lowes Dickenson points out, it was a purely mechanical one ¹ ; neither mystical nor spiritual. It was a relation pertaining to the physical plane, and bearing the nature of a contract or bargain. Conscience, as the Christian understands that word, did not exist for the ancient Greek ; if he had offended the gods, all he was sensible of was fear—he deemed they would punish him for his offence. The form that punishment would take might be sickness or misfortune—in any case, it would be connected with this physical life. Merely to be forgiven by the gods for the asking was not to be thought of ; he must offer them gifts, sacrifice to them, flatter them ; there was no other way : were they not beings, with vanities and passions, like himself ?

¹ See "The Greek View of Life."

Yet despite this material conception, the Greeks believed in a future life, but they were even less anxious to experience it than is the average Christian. They were far too happy with the joys of the physical world to wish for those of the super-physical ; indeed, many of their great poets and dramatists painted the whole after-death state in colours of the utmost pessimism. Instead of welcoming death, they regarded it and its forerunner old age with something approaching horror ; to grow old and be no longer physically attractive was for them the saddest of prospects. How widely different from the attitude of the Hindu, so engrossed in thoughts of "heaven" as almost entirely to neglect the things of earth ! As the Hindu was all for dreamy contemplation, the Greek was all for action, athletic excitement, games, contests, heroic deeds, in fine—the glorification of the physical. Even into friendships between members of the same sex the physical entered, not because the Greeks were an utterly depraved and licentious people—far from it—but rather because it was the inevitable outcome of their entire conception of life. They saw in the physical body the most beautiful of "the gods'" creations, and worshipped it accordingly. And the law was with them in this ; passionate friendships between men, instead of being prohibited, were actually an institution. With the Greeks passion was not so much a matter of sex as of love, and hence it was a purer type of passion than that of other nations, although on the surface it may have seemed less so. Thus legislators, instead of regarding homosexuality as hostile to law and order, encouraged it ; to them it was not something impure, but even advantageous to the State. As such passionate friendships were usually between an older and a younger man, the former exercised a beneficial influence upon the latter's mind ; he educated and developed him.¹ To many of us nowadays, of course,

¹ See Lowes Dickenson, "The Greek View of Life."

sexual irregularities, even when coupled with idealism, seem repugnant, but that is merely because our point of view is so radically different from that of the ancient Greeks. Puritanism has left its sombre hues upon our morals—puritanism, that strange attitude of mind which regards nearly everything beautiful as anti-spiritual, and nearly everything ugly as spiritual ! But to the Greek nature it was utterly foreign, as was hypocrisy, that other attribute with which it is so closely allied. So little did the Greeks understand of either of these, that Demosthenes in open court declared that every married man “ requires at least two mistresses.”¹ Such *liaisons*, in fact, were not only approved by custom, but were actually consistent with religion—were there not temples in honour of Aphrodite Pandemos, the goddess of illicit love ?

It will be seen then that the physical element played a prodigious part in every phase of Greek life ; and we will now briefly turn our attention, first, to the esoteric side of Hellenistic thought ; and, second, to the various schools of philosophy which flourished around the fifth and fourth centuries before Christ.

As every student knows, the Mysteries existed in Greece as they existed in Egypt, where they originated ; there were also strange cults such as the cult of Dionysus, the god of inspiration and wine. Yet although the Mysteries have come to possess a historical fame, they formed as little an integral part of popular religious thought as, say, the cult of the Plymouth Brethren forms an integral part of *British* religious thought. For we must not make the mistake of confounding the ideas set forth by some of the famous Greek writers—who were initiated into the Mysteries—with the ideas of the ordinary people. Mr. Bernard Shaw, for example, is Irish, but to maintain that he represents Irish thought of to-day would be hardly correct. Great thinkers, be they reformers, poets or

¹ *Ibid.*

philosophers, are not a product of national thought, but *vice versâ* ; national thought is, or may be, the product of great thinkers ; these set the ideal, and in the course of time the people live up to that ideal or not, according to circumstances.¹

And so, in reviewing the effects of Greek music on the thought, character and life of the Greeks, we do not include Plato, Pythagoras and several other eminent writers. It is, in fact, well known that far from endorsing Greek polytheistic ideas, Plato was fundamentally a monotheist ; and as to the famous dramatists, some of them permitted themselves much sarcastic gaiety in connection with the current religious beliefs. Thus the mysticism to be found in the works of Greek philosophers was not representative of Grecian thought, and the mysticism to be found associated with the cult of Dionysus, for instance, was but another example of the physical as basis, for its rites show that although their aim was to induce a "mystical" ² state of consciousness, the means employed were of a physical nature. In striking contrast to the Indian Yogi who, using the mind only, sits with closed eyes motionless in a cave, every means was employed to stimulate the *senses*. Music in which percussion instruments predominated and worked directly on the nerves, "dances convulsing every limb and dazzling the eyes and brain, inebriating drinks, these formed a part of those strange revels described by Euripides in the 'Bacchæ.' " ³ They were, in fact, merely a more artistic form of Dervish dance or Salvation Army meeting, both of which achieve certain emotional effects through an over-excitation of the physical nerves.

And now to mention the schools of philosophy for which Greece has come to be so renowned. The

¹ See Notes (8).

² We use "mystical" in its broadest sense.

³ See Lowes Dickenson.

Platonic and Pythagorean were the outcome of Initiation, and, as the music used in the Mysteries was of a specific order not given forth to the people, the popular music of Greece cannot be said to have influenced those esoteric schools. With regard to the others, they were, like Greek art, the product of unemotionalised mind ; they were simply formed, to use the colloquial phrase, by "thinking things out." Critical persons came to find that the gods and their behaviour did not bear the test of scrutiny, so there arose a spirit similar to that which in the middle of last century was termed agnosticism. True it is that materialistic philosophers who denied the gods had existed in Greece all along, in other words, a certain conflict between religion and science did not come suddenly into being ; but it was only by the fifth century B.C. that it assumed such formidable proportions and became so pronounced that the general belief in the gods was seriously undermined. Nor was this all ; eventually philosophers arose who even undermined the foundations of politics and ethics—in fine, scepticism was rife ; and had not Plato appeared to adjust the balance by revealing a judicious portion of esoteric teaching, materialism would have spread far and wide.

It will no doubt read strangely if we say that the self-same agent which produced religion produced its anti-thesis—atheism ; yet owing to the peculiar nature of the Greek religion, such was the case. As we have already stated, and others before us, the religion of Greece with all its supernaturalism was but a glorified *materialistic belief*. The gods, to summarise, were but grandiose human beings with all the passions of the latter included, and the relationship between man and these gods was little better than that between man and man. They were practically nothing nobler than unseen physical creatures endowed with immortality and power. And so herein lies the explanation why the music which tended to

produce the Greek religion tended also to produce scepticism and materialism. For it must especially be noted in connection with music and this book that the same cause does not invariably produce the same effects ; if this were the case, it would only be necessary to play a hymn-tune in order to make people religious ; what it *does* produce is a fundamental *similarity* of effect, or, more simply put, effects which are akin but not absolutely alike. Now, there is no *fundamental* difference between the believer and the sceptic ; the former is incredulous about one set of theories or facts, the latter is incredulous about another set—that is all. The believer cannot believe that the whole universe is fashioned by Chance, and the sceptic cannot believe that it is fashioned by God—or the gods. To the believer the sceptic's attitude seems unreasonable and absurd, and to the sceptic the believer's attitude seems equally unreasonable and absurd. The Greek atheist might have argued with his opponent : “ I believe in the all-sufficiency of matter itself—I require to posit no unseen but materialistic Gods . . . ” Yet the whole contention turned on the question of matter, when all is said ; each party was materialistic in its own manner.

We have shown how the mighty civilisation of Egypt declined ; and it now remains to show the underlying cause why Greece followed so disastrously in its wake.

The Egyptians fell through love of power, the Greeks through love of beauty “ run riot.” As time progressed, they became more and more voluptuous and preoccupied with the pleasures of the senses, thus withdrawing their energy from the mind and its activities ; in consequence, they lost their powers of perception and of reasoning. As with the Egyptians—for these comparisons are instructive—their downfall came about through a perversion of their chief characteristic. The third-tone of Egyptian music had been a strong factor in producing occult science, and through a perversion of that science its civilisation declined ;

similarly, the half-tone of Greek music had been a strong factor in producing the cult of physical beauty, with the same disastrous result. Nor does the similarity end here : both with Egyptian and Greek music, not only was the wisdom-engendering quarter-tone lacking, but the harmonic or religio-devotional aspect¹ was insufficient to adjust the balance. Had it been more pronounced, it would have diverted much of the Greek love of physical beauty into higher channels ; into love of *spiritual* beauty ; but for this it was too meagre, too crude. Moreover, the little there was died out, and so harmony vanished from Greek as it had done from Egyptian music.

Other changes also took place ; the more sensuous strains of the viol were finally substituted for those of stronger-toned instruments, and musical taste altogether became weak and effeminate ; merely a means of titillating the senses. In place of true artists, a great increase in the number of mere *virtuosi* had occurred, and the predominant influence of these in music must nearly always be looked upon as the first step in its downward course. For instance, in the year 456 B.C., Phrynis, the Citharæde, aroused great enthusiasm by his wonderful execution of scale passages. . . . Moreover, the same striving after effect, observable among the performers on the flute and lyre, had also begun to show itself among the singers. Instead of tasteful melodies, tunes were embellished with every species of superfluous ornament ; so much so that Aristophanes was constrained to point out that in the time of his forefathers measured rhythm and simple melody were the fundamental rules of music. True, many modern writers have expressed the same sentiments relative to the music of *their* forefathers ; nevertheless, it is obvious from other evidence collected, that “Zopf”

¹ We shall elaborate the rationale of chordal music later on. It is for the moment sufficient to remind our readers of the devotional effects produced by the better class of hymns.

had become a feature of Greek music—that word used to express the degenerate phase of art when mere *embellishment* predominates in contradistinction to *substance*. “Thus artifice was substituted for art, and sensuous effect for heartfelt emotion.”¹

With so radical a change in their music, the character of the Greeks themselves weakened; their *morale* declined; their military enterprises were unsuccessful; they allowed other nations to meddle in their affairs; finally, they lost their patriotism and love of independence, and, with the loss of these, prosperity was at an end.

It is instructive to note that music gradually began to fall from its elevated status at the very period at which the other Greek arts had attained their greatest excellence, namely, during the era of Pericles, 444–429 B.C. If the reverse had been the case, there would be some grounds for the proverbial notion that a particular type of music is the result of character, morals, etc., instead of *vice versa*; or that when the other arts flourish, so does music along with them. But the Greek writers knew otherwise; for even apart from that esoteric knowledge which Plato, for one, undoubtedly possessed, history enforced the lesson that the rise and decay of the tonal art was most intimately connected with the rise and decay of civilisation itself.

¹ See Naumann, “History of Music.” Also Chapter XXIX.

CHAPTER XXV

THE ROMANS AND THEIR MUSIC

Whereas Greece fell through a perverted love of beauty, Rome fell through a perverted love of manliness.

IT has been said, and rightly so, that the Romans were the most practical people in history—they were a people of action, but not of imagination. Like the matter-of-fact downright type of Englishman, they admired manliness, self-restraint, seriousness of demeanour, industry and the natural outcome of these, Law and Order. Of the subtler qualities they had little or no understanding ; their art was realistic, their architecture massive, and their attitude towards religion mostly material. Only a practical people could conceive of and worship spirits connected with the most mundane walks of life—with the hearth-fire, with the store-closet, with the begetting of children, and so forth ; yet not only did these spirits exist for the Romans, they were even the objects of daily rites, at which the head of the family officiated while his children joined him in the capacity of acolytes.¹ But their most venerated god was Mars, the god of war, whom they regarded as vastly superior to Apollo, Aphrodite and the Muses—those personifications of the Greek ideals of Purity, Beauty and Song. Thus we find in the Romans the union of the practical and the religious ; we also find a people of high military talent who by their “simplicity, veracity and by their sober unimaginativeness” “had

¹ See “Rome,” by Ward Fowler.

conquered an empire and governed it in a way which constitutes the most important epoch in the history of the world." ¹

Yet the time was to come when Rome was to be celebrated not for its greatness, but for its unprecedented depravity. Let us seek to discover if music played any part in its rise and decline, and if so, to what extent.

"If we enquire," writes Sir John Hawkins,² "into the state of music among the Romans, we shall find that, as a science, they held it in small estimation. And to this fact Cornelius Nepos bears the fullest testimony; for, relating in his life of Epaminondas that he could dance, play on the harp and flute, he adds that in Greece these accomplishments were greatly esteemed, but by the Romans they were little regarded." Cicero held a similar view, as is evident from some of his writings, in which he says that music and "the more polite arts" were left to the Greeks. There nevertheless existed, about 308 B.C. a college for what were termed tibicinists (players upon a species of flute) whose office it was to perform at all public solemnities and religious ceremonies. But—again to quote Sir John Hawkins—it only serves to show the low state of Roman music "when the best instruments they could find to celebrate the praises of their deities were a few sorry pipes, little better than those we now offer as playthings for children."

It is thus obvious that there was little music in Rome; there was, however, one type which for purely utilitarian reasons the Romans did encourage, and that was martial music; for it added its quota to the making of fine soldiers. And it was not limited to "a few sorry pipes." . . . There is evidence to show that "the Romans possessed an unusually large number of martial and especially of wind instruments," ³ the chief of this kind

¹ R. F. Horton, "A History of the Romans."

² See Naumann, "History of Music," Chapter XXVI.

³ *Ibid.*

being the Tuba and Buccina. The former was somewhat like a trumpet, though much larger and longer than the modern orchestral trumpet ; the latter was somewhat like a horn, though again much larger than our modern horn.

To give a detailed account of the effects of this martial music : it energised the body and tended to produce health, courage and sex-virility—those qualities which make up the one composite quality that the Romans called *virtus*, or manliness, as the word finally came to signify. It was, in fact, an entirely restricted type of music, with correspondingly restricted effects : it worked upon the physical, yet, owing to its lack of the more mellow phases, it engendered no love of physical beauty as the Greeks understood it, for it did not touch those emotions which inspire imagination. Whereas the Greeks admired a powerful healthy body because they considered it beautiful, the Romans admired it merely because they considered that the human body *should* be powerful and healthy ; the one point of view was æsthetic, the other practical ; the basis of both standpoints was the physical, but the angles from which it was regarded were widely divergent.

Now the effects of martial music pure and simple, unless counteracted by more refining influences, are liable, in the course of time, to become detrimental to character ; manliness may degenerate into love of power, courage into brutality, and sex-virility into sensualism. And this is precisely what occurred with the Romans. The Revolution of 133 B.C. was due to the first-mentioned of these bad qualities ; it was entirely the result “ of an antagonism between the few who possessed the reins of power and the many who conceived they had a right to that possession.” As to the second of the evils enumerated we find it in its most virulent form in those terrible Gladiatorial Games which came to be a feature of the

later days of Roman society, and which were excused on the plea "that they upheld the military spirit by the constant spectacle of courageous death." That—whether they temporarily sustained that spirit or not—they were largely responsible for the downfall of Rome, has been shown by historians: for they took such a hold on the nation that all else was neglected. Apart from the fact that these games encouraged inhumanity, they encouraged idleness, having become of such absorbing interest to the people that the various industrial occupations were set aside, together with those others which go to the maintenance of the State. But if brutality played havoc with the nation, sensualism, the third vice we have mentioned proved equally destructive. Sensualism and its concomitant dissipation, owing to the weakening effect they have upon the body and nerves, are very frequently provocative of cowardice, and when there is an epidemic of cowardice in a State it stands at the mercy of its enemies. Indifference is substituted for patriotism, and the people cease to care whether they are ruled by their own countrymen or by foreign invaders.

The foregoing were thus the effects of martial music, namely, the exact opposite of those intended. And if this statement seems too extravagant for acceptance, let the reader recall the influence of certain drugs. The self-same drug, taken in small quantities, will *cure*, in larger quantities *kill*—a similar thing occurs with music.

Nevertheless, Rome might have been saved if another musical ingredient could have been added to its potion—the best features of Greek music before it degenerated into mere virtuosity. As most people are aware, when the Romans conquered Greece there was a considerable influx of Greek literature into Rome, but although a certain amount of music was borne along with it, the Roman musical taste was such that the better class was never accepted in Roman society—in fact, the love of the

virtuoso was even more pronounced than it had come to be in Greece. Moreover, "it is a question," writes Naumann, "whether the Roman virtuosi were not more admired for their personal blandishments and enchantments than for their skilful performances. In place of one celebrated female flautist, as in Greece, Rome possessed whole groups of them. The story of the degenerate and degraded citharœdes and female flautists is a dark page in the history of Rome. The decay of the tonal art was so complete, its practice falling into the hands of adventurous strangers and women who enticed by their charms, that, by the direction of the State, it was expunged from the curriculum of Roman education, the State arguing that an art practised by slaves and the despised classes of society was not befitting to the educational training of youthful patricians. Thus, all too soon, were fulfilled the prophetic words of Aristotle, that an art having for its object the mere display of digital skill and sensuous attraction was unbecoming to the dignity of men, and fit only for slaves."

The above requires but little comment, for it is self-evident that a music lacking in such essentials would not only be powerless to counteract the baneful effects of a preponderance of martial music, but, in view of what has been stated in the last chapter, would cause a further degeneracy in the national character. And although—if Lecky's surmise be correct—that degeneracy fostered the emotionalism which predisposed men towards a new religion, it was also responsible for moulding it in a fashion quite at variance with the Teachings of its Founder. Not that we labour under the delusion that Christianity—or might we say "Churchianity"—originated in the manner facile imagination has depicted, for one need only study history and comparative religion to know that it arose from an amalgamation of Indian, Egyptian and Jewish thought. The Church with its Popes, Cardinals

and Bishops "arrayed in purple and fine linen," bears no resemblance whatever to the life of Christ and His Teachings as portrayed in the Gospels. There He is represented as the wandering Sannyasin with nowhere in particular "to lay His head," and, *like* the Sannyasin roaming the country, teaching, healing and collecting disciples. That the "pomp and circumstance," therefore, which became associated with the Church was partly the aftermath of that love of luxury which characterised the Romans in their degenerate days is obvious. It was the result of character moulding religion to its desires, instead of religion moulding character. But this is not all ; for when we come to examine the strange behaviour of the early Christian saints we see another phase of Roman degeneracy—not cruelty to others, but cruelty to oneself : in other words, self-torture. And what is more, the assumption that this self-torture was in some unaccountable way pleasing to God, despite the fact that no such practice is advocated in the Gospels as a pre-requisite to sanctity. Nor, unfortunately, did it remain at self-torture ; the Christians came eventually to persecute their fellow-Christians ; cruelty was, so to speak, "in the air," and if it did not manifest itself in one form, it manifested itself in another. The same applies to luxury and sensualism, for as every unprejudiced person knows, early sacerdotal history does not bear examination through the moral microscope. This is not to say that no saintly characters, no true Christians in the best sense of the word were to be met with at this period of history—far from it, there were many—but they constituted the exception and not the rule. It is with the general state of morals that we are concerned in this book, and not with those isolated individuals, seeing that it is this general state which music influences. That in the case of Roman morals music, at the beginning of the Christian era, had fallen into such a low state as virtually to have

died out, and therefore to have been unable to act as a corrective to the over-accentuation of its erstwhile martial effects, is evident from the writings of several men around that period who *speculated* as to the nature of the lost Egyptian and Greek music. The first of these writers is Alypius, who lived A.D. 115, and who asks : " What are become of the charms of music by which men and beasts, fishes, fowls and serpents were so frequently enchanted *and their very natures changed* " (the italics are ours) " by which the passions of men were raised to the greatest height and violence, and then so suddenly appeased, so as they might justly be said to be turned into lions or lambs, into wolves or into harts by the power and charms of this admirable art ? 'Tis agreed of all the learned that the science of music so admired by the ancients is wholly lost, and that what we have now is made up of certain notes that fell into the fancy or observation of a *poor friar* in chanting his *matins* : so as those two divine excellences of music and poetry are grown in a manner little more but the one fiddling and the other rhyming . . . "

And this quotation is doubly significant, for it not only shows that music had practically disappeared, but implies that its forceful influence had been withdrawn for some considerable time. We have therefore to consider the re-evolution of music from the chantings of the " poor friar," and its various effects on European character.

CHAPTER XXVI

EFFECTS OF DESCANT AND THE FOLK-SONG

It is instructive to note that music practically recommenced with the monks—it was once again associated with religion. But this does not mean that it was rediscovered ; on the contrary, certain of the Greek modes served as its basis, and upon these it was gradually built. Although as early as A.D. 115 the “poor friar” may have vocally improvised while reciting his *matins*, we have no historical evidence of any systematisation of church music until about 347, when Flavius and Diodorus (bishops of Antioch and Tarsus) divided their choristers into two parts and commanded them to sing the Psalms of David alternately. But previous to this it is related how St. Ignatius saw and heard “the blessed spirits above singing hymns to the Sacred Trinity alternately, which method of singing . . . together with an account of the miracle¹ which gave rise to it, was communicated to all the Churches of the East.” The Western Churches, however, did not adopt the practice of singing in their services till about 374, the year in which Justina, an Arian, commenced a persecution against St. Ambrose and the orthodox. As during this persecution the people spent the whole night in the church “watching and praying,” Ambrose appointed that hymns and psalms should be sung in order to cheer their spirits. Finally, he introduced what came to be

¹ If this account be true, the miracle may be explained by the more rational supposition that St. Ignatius possessed both clairvoyance and clair-audience ; *i.e.*, he contacted the music of one of the higher planes.

known as the Ambrosian Chant, his idea being to evolve a species of melody founded on the rules of art, yet so straightforward that the whole congregation could sing it without difficulty. It is true that prior to 360, congregational singing had been in vogue in Antioch, but it had been of such a low order—the laity having actually derided the clergy with coarse songs of their own invention—that a canon had been made ordaining that in future none but the choristers should presume to sing. How or why St. Ambrose came to ignore this edict does not concern us in our present enquiry.

The introduction of a certain form in primitive church music was not without its result ; through the constant repetition of single tones, with occasional deviations to lower or higher ones, a chant of a *mantramistic* nature was produced which had a direct influence on the brain—it inclined men to think in a more orderly manner. And as the majority of souls incarnate at that time were young and unevolved, and hence possessed of undeveloped mentalities, this was highly essential. Only by using the brain is the *mental body* formed and nourished—a fact we have already pointed out. As disorderly thinking by the force of habit produces disorderly minds, an external agent had to be employed ; that agent was the Ambrosian Chant. That it compelled the congregation while singing it to *pay attention*—for it forced them to concentrate their minds—gave it already a certain power, but, in addition, it had more subtle effects ; it was partly instrumental in eventually inspiring the clergy to introduce a method of ceremonial into the Church which had not been previously employed.

The external and mundane reasons for this were connected with the barbarian invasion. As Guizot says in his lectures on the History of the Civilisation in Europe : “ When the Empire fell—when, instead of the ancient Roman system, the government, in the midst of which

the Church had taken birth, with which she had arisen, and had habits in common, and ancient ties, she found herself exposed to those barbarian kings and chiefs who wandered over the land . . . and to whom neither traditions, creeds nor sentiments could unite her ; her danger was great, and as great was her terror. . . . A single idea became dominant . . . this was to take possession of the newcomers, to convert them. . . . We therefore find at this epoch a great augmentation in the number, pomp and variety of the ceremonies of worship. The chronicles prove that this was the chief means by which the Church acted upon the barbarians ; she converted them by splendid spectacles."

Now the Ambrosian Chant itself was highly formal in design, and pre-eminently repetitious. In addition to this, its emotional content was religious. Consequently, through its powers of suggestion, it had a marked influence on the minds of the clergy, which resulted in the evolving of the species of ceremonial already mentioned. The latter was a replica in action of the Ambrosian Chant in music. It was highly formal, as is all ceremonial, and was equally repetitious ; its grandeur, however, cannot be attributed to the Ambrosian Chant, but to the causes previously stated, and also to the aftermath of that love of luxury and grandeur which characterised the Romans in the days of their degeneracy.

Although from the times of St. Ambrose music had somewhat tended to develop the minds of Christians, no innovation worthy of mention was connected with it until about two centuries later, when St. Gregory the Great became Pope. Being "a man," as it is related, "not more remarkable for his virtues than for his learning and profound skill in the science of music," he set about making several improvements. As the Ambrosian Chant had been limited to four modes, he increased them to eight ; and this resulted in the institution of what is

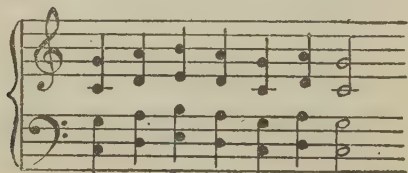
termed "plain song," or the Gregorian Chant. This Chant was undoubtedly useful to the Church, for it acted as an aid to devotion,¹ and rendered the minds of the whole congregation one-pointed. But the Gregorian Chant had a further result : it tended somewhat to calm the emotions, and so gave a measure of control over the *emotional body*. For one thing it was, musically speaking, too unsexuctive, too austere to arouse those pleasant feelings which true melody arouses ; for another, when the mind is fully engaged, the emotions—at any rate the more turbulent ones—are usually for the time being quiescent ; and we say advisedly "for the time being," because it took a very considerable period of years before mankind in general acquired control over their emotions.² If we study life in the Middle Ages, with its sensuality and cruel fanaticism, we find lack of emotional, or, better said, *passional* control to be the root of all its vices. Instead of allowing themselves to be influenced by the calming aspects of music, people strove, however unconsciously, against them. The reason is that through the emotions man derives *immediate pleasure* of an intense kind, and hence does not *want* to suppress them. If he discovers that pleasure may *also* be derived from the mind, he develops it in addition. Throughout history there have existed notorious characters with great intellects combined with very low passions, and although they are fairly exceptional, they afford us exaggerated examples of a general tendency—the development to a certain extent of the mentality without a corresponding development (*i.e.*, in the form of control) of the emotions. This tendency was very marked in the epoch of which we write, but the Gregorian Chant was undoubtedly in some measure instrumental in combating it. The people were no longer as consistently cruel as they had been in the days

¹ See Notes (9).

² They have only very partially succeeded even now.

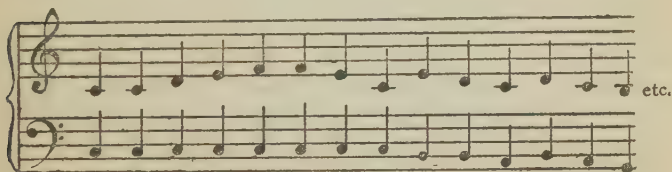
of the Gladiatorial Games, and even signs of a distinct charitableness were to be observed in several directions. Nevertheless, as already implied, it is more to the mental realm that we must look for decided changes ; and these became especially noticeable in the monastic life. Not only had theology come into existence, but literary labour was becoming a favourite pursuit with the monks.

The next important innovation in ecclesiastical music took place about the eighth century ; it bore the name of *Descant*, and consisted of chanting in *chords*. The *modus operandi*, as described in an ancient manuscript, is as follows : “ Let there be four or five singers, and let one begin the plain-song in the tenor ; let the second pitch his voice in the fifth above, the third in the eighth, and the fourth . . . in the twelfth, and all begin and continue in these concordances till the end.” There then follow some ambiguous instructions very difficult to understand, and finally : “ For this kind of singing four persons are sufficient, provided there be one to descant continually, in the twelfth above the plain-song.” In modern notation we gather that descant would appear thus :—

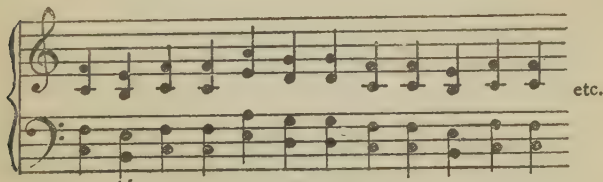


It will be noticed that the twelfth from the bass is practically equivalent to a fifth ; a concord not very pleasing to our present-day ears ; but as another part of the manuscript quoted leads us to suppose that the accompanying voices must be softer than the tenor, the effect would be more like the *quintatont* stop on an organ than that produced by a modern chorus or vocal quartet singing

bare fifths in octaves. Still, whether pleasing to our aural sense or not, the influence of this descant was one of co-ordination, an element which became even more pronounced when an occasional third and fourth were introduced. Examples of this are given by Hucbald, a Flemish monk who flourished about 880, and who, it is maintained, devised a particular notation of his own. The first of these examples which we reproduce in present-day notation, shows the beginning of conventional modern two-part harmony :—



The second example, however, though in four parts, can hardly be termed harmonious, as we nowadays understand the term.



All the same it may be said of Hucbald that he had a scientific mind and was able to marshal facts. He was also a poet of considerable though eccentric ingenuity, seeing that he composed a poem of a hundred *stanzas* in praise of baldness, in which every word began with the letter C ; it was dedicated to Charles the Bald !

But if Hucbald played an important part in the musical

history of those times, another composer of greater importance flourished about a century later ; he is known by the name of Guido of Arezzo, and was born in Italy in 990.¹ If we compare one of his phrases with those of Hucbald previously cited, we find a considerable diminution of harshness, and also that the third was used no less than four times, while no fourths were used at all. In addition to these improvements, Guido is renowned for others ; he was one of the first ecclesiastical composers to regard music as an *art* as well as a science ; he held that it ought to be a medium of expression, and that “the musician must so arrange his song that it be but a reflection of the words.”

Now the effects of Guido's music were considerable, for it was instrumental in helping to bring harmonious relations into the home and social life. How this was accomplished is again explained by that law of correspondences—as in music, so in life. For it seems hardly necessary to point out that in all compositions where there are chords or more than one voice or part, there must perforce exist that coherence which naturally connotes law and order. Chordal music, in fact, is the musical prototype of harmonious relationships between individual units, and its effect is to produce a feeling of friendliness, and, of course, if in addition it is associated with religion—the result is friendliness plus religious devotion. It was the instinctive recognition of this truth which resulted in the introduction of hymns into the Church service. But these effects of chordal music, especially that of Guido's, were not limited to social relationships ; they also to some extent harmonised the *mental* and *emotional* organisms, thus producing greater unity between them. Henceforward man was no longer to be an absolute slave of his emotions, but to begin to experience the domination of the mind ; or, to phrase it colloquially, his mind was no

¹ He died in 1050.

longer to pull one way, and his emotions another ; the two were in some small measure to be brought into alignment ; they were to work more in conjunction instead of at variance.

The harmonisation of the mind and emotions had a further result—it was conducive to the production of *art*. Only when the emotions and the mind are conjoined can any form of art worthy of the name be created ; for although the inspirational impulse comes through the emotions, the mind is responsible for the technique. Thus Guido's music paved the way for that great school of art which commenced with the advent of Cimabue around 1280.

We have shown that Descant, which Guido so greatly improved, was introduced about the eighth century, and that its chief effects were those of co-ordination. And if we study European history relating to that epoch, we shall see that not only were various attempts made to bring this about, notably on the part of Charlemagne and his protégé Alcurin, but that finally the internal and moral condition of man himself began to change. The wandering life which had been a chief feature in barbarism began to cease throughout the interior of Europe. Man's " ideas and sentiments, like his life, acquired fixedness ; he attached himself to the places which he inhabited, to the relations which he had contracted there, to those domains which he began to promise himself that he would bequeath to his children, to that dwelling which one day he will call his castle, to that miserable collection of colonists and slaves which will one day become a village. Everywhere little societies, little States, cut, so to speak to the measure of the ideas and the wisdom of man, formed themselves. Between these societies was gradually introduced the bond, of which the customs of barbarism contained the germ, the bond of a confederation which did not annihilate individual independence. On the one

hand, every considerable person established himself in his domains, alone with his family and servitors; on the other hand, a certain hierarchy of services and rights became established between these war-like proprietors scattered over the land. What was this? The feudal system rising definitely from the bosom of barbarism.”¹

On all sides, then, the element of co-ordination, the bringing of people into companies and the forming of ties is to be observed. But there is one thing we must not overlook—that ties would not endure without the sentiment of *patriotism*²: this sentiment was inspired by the folk-song. For the effect of the bardic lay of all peoples, with its extollation of valour and similar characteristics, was fundamentally patriotic; and hence it was the admixture of the co-ordinating church music and the folk-song which was the underlying cause of Feudalism. Church music, indeed, tended not only to inspire religious devotion, but devotion in the less specific sense of the word—to the lord of the castle, to the clan and the joint interests of the clan. In brief, feudalism was the beginning of social unity in the West.

From the tenth to the thirteenth century, when Feudalism reached its zenith, and when the effects of Hucbald's and Guido's music had become fully operative, we meet with a variety of noble sentiments, further inspired by that type of folk-song known as that of the Troubadours. These latter, with their graceful melodies and quaint lyrical conceits, while on the one hand they fostered heroism, on the other hand fostered the “gentler side of life,” known by the name of Chivalry. Indeed, the combination of the Troubadour song and its variants was, in conjunction with the devotion-inspiring Church

¹ See Guizot.

² Though patriotism in this connection means fidelity to the clan or barony rather than to the country, we are compelled to use the word for want of a better.

music, responsible for the Knight-errant and the Crusader : in the latter both religion and love of adventure were combined. The Crusades, however, were especially significant in view of what we have previously written, since they were the first enterprise in which the whole of Europe took part, and hence were another external sign of co-ordination.

CHAPTER XXVII

THE BEGINNING OF POLYPHONY AND ITS EFFECTS

WE have now to consider an important innovation in musical device which occurred as early as the thirteenth century ; it is technically known as canon, a word derived from the Greek κανών, meaning rule or standard. According to Grove's "Dictionary," "its principle is that one voice begins a melody, which melody is imitated precisely, note for note, and (generally) interval for interval, by some other voice, either at the same or a different pitch, beginning a few notes later, and thus, as it were, running after the leader. . . . Often in a quartet there may be a canon between two of the voices, while the other two are free, or three voices may be in *canon*, and the fourth part free."

Apparently the oldest composition on record written in this form is an English song called "Sumer is icumen in," a piece which has provoked much speculation ; historians being unable to say whether it has been handed down to us "as the one survivor of many such or as a solitary inspiration."¹ Personally, we incline to the former view, namely, that other canons were written at the time, but only this particular one has survived, owing to its especial charm. But whether this be true or not, it is certain that in the fifteenth century when John Dunstable lived, polyphony² underwent a remarkable transformation in the hands of that eminent English musician.

¹ See Henry Davey, "History of English Music."

² All forms of imitation, of which canon is one, come under this heading.

His innovations, in fact, were so considerable that the authority just quoted maintains that he was "the originator of the whole art of composition, and is in one sense the most important figure in the whole range of musical history." For instance, "instead of taking a plain-song and setting fifths and eighths, or continuous meaningless runs founded on fifths and eighths, Dunstable cut the voice parts with rests, breaking them into phrases."¹ Moreover, he used suspensions, passing notes and short imitations. It should be stated, however, that singing in thirds—a fact not previously mentioned—was already a habitual practice with the Welsh and the inhabitants of Northern England; so that in banishing the bare fifths and octaves Dunstable was doing nothing so very revolutionary. But this remark is not intended as a reflection upon his merit, which was indeed so high that the French, Spanish, Flemish and German writers around that period extolled him as the first and greatest composer of the day. They likewise greatly extolled that English school of which he was the founder.

The effects of *canon* and *imitation* considerably enhanced those inspired by the choral music mentioned in our last chapter; they were conducive to an easier give-and-take in human intercourse, as may again be perceived by the law of correspondences. For the *canon* itself is formed on the principle of give-and-take—the melody being first sung by one voice, then by another, while, in the case of a quartet, the two remaining voices fill in the harmony. But the *canon*, as well as all other forms of polyphonic music, tends—owing to its mathematical qualities—to develop the intellect²; and hence we find that the more polyphonic music became, the more noticeable those attributes which went to the forming of what

¹ See Henry Davey, "History of English Music."

² This we mentioned when dealing with Bach's music, which was the culmination of the polyphonic style.

Draper has termed the "Age of Reason." We shall, however, deal with these effects in our chapter on the Reformation ; it is for the moment our purpose to point out how through an easier give-and-take, how through greater co-ordination national unity was achieved *without* premeditation or apparent design.

As readers of European history know, all those attempts made between the twelfth and the fourteenth century at this so greatly desired unity, had proved abortive. Theocracy, aristocracy, democracy and royalty had been tried and had miserably failed, owing to the absence of universal interests, because all had been too local, too individual ; all the small communities had been pulling in different ways. None the less, in the fifteenth century, without premeditation or apparent design, we repeat, national unity was established in France, also in Spain, while in England and Italy unifying processes of a very pronounced nature were in operation. Under the English King, Henry VII., the era of political centralisation and the triumph of royalty commenced ; and as to Italy, the greater portion of the republics gave place to sovereign houses.

Thus we see the cumulative effects of music working imperceptibly in the hearts of the people themselves towards that desideratum which no amount of planning and scheming on the part of rulers and reformers had been able to accomplish. The folk-song had inspired the gentler side of life, and the chordal and polyphonic music that capacity to give-and-take which is essential to unification.

But this was not all. In the fifteenth century, for the first time, those international alliances were formed—it matters not whether for peace or war—which, in the course of time, produced the system of equilibrium. In other words, diplomacy in Europe dates from the fifteenth century ; and we find that towards its close the chief

powers of continental Europe, emperors, kings, popes, dukes, established various connections, united and negotiated with one another in order to arrive at some sort of balance. Previous to this, governments had worked almost entirely by force and material methods, hereafter *policy* was brought into play, persuasion, artifice, in short, *intellectual* means instead of violence.

Yet that the "savage beast" had been completely tamed, it is impossible to assert, for in horrible contrast to these moral improvements the Inquisition must be considered.

Superficial thinkers of the present day are apt to regard Torquemada, and, indeed, nearly all the Inquisitors as Sadists who practised their lust for cruelty under the cloak of religious zeal. But if we look at the matter through the eyes of reason instead of indignation—however righteous—we find this to be far from true. To say that the Inquisition was entirely the result of the lust for cruelty is as unjust as to say the same thing of vivisection; the difference is superficial, not fundamental. The Inquisitor made war against heresy by torturing humans; the vivisector makes war against disease by torturing¹ animals; both policies are the result of fanaticism, the one religious, the other scientific. Furthermore, both policies *involve* cruelty, but are not actuated by cruelty itself, which is by no means the same. A study of Torquemada's history² shows that he led a life of austerity and purity, "untouched by worldly ambitions. . . . Dauntless amid execrations, unmoved by plaudits, sublimely disdainful of temporal weal, in nothing is he so admirable as in the unfaltering self-abnegation with which he devotes himself to the service of his God, in nothing so terrible and tragically deplorable as in the actual service he renders . . ."

¹ To inoculate animals with disease germs *is* a form of torture, whether we call it so or not.

² See "Torquemada," by Rafael Sabatini.

Perhaps Prescott is nearest the truth when he says that "Torquemada's zeal was of so extraordinary a character that it may almost shelter itself under the name of insanity."¹ Prescott has also said: "His history may be thought to prove that of all human infirmities there is none productive of more extensive mischief to society than fanaticism."²

Now what are the moral ingredients which, blended together in human character, produce fanaticism? Lack of balance and lack of knowledge. Add to these two factors lack of true sympathy and compassion for human suffering, and we see at once the causes of the Inquisition, or, rather, of the cruel manner in which its decrees were carried out. When sympathy for human suffering outweighs all other considerations, torture as an instrument of so-called justice becomes unthinkable.

From the point of view of musical effects, a study of the Inquisition, in view of the particular period of history at which it occurred, is highly instructive.

We have seen that the effects of the quarter-tone on the ancient peoples of India was in part responsible for their great attainments in the realm of metaphysics: by them the truths relative to Karma, reincarnation and the unseen super-physical planes were fully comprehended. Again the Egyptians, through the third-tone, were fully alive to the existence of these super-physical planes; it was only with the introduction of the half-tone and its employment by the Western races that these truths were—if not lost, at any rate submerged, and only realised by the very few outside India itself. For with the conquest of the *material* world, the *immaterial* receded further and further into the nebulous background of mere *belief*—the light of *knowledge* had all but disappeared from the mental horizon, and as soon as the light of knowledge fades, then

¹ See "Torquemada," by Rafael Sabatini.

² Prescott, "Ferdinand and Isabella."

fanaticism thrives. It was not as yet possible to re-introduce the quarter or third-tone into the music of the day, the whole of musical evolution having moved along different lines. The result was a type of religion based upon an utterly false conception of God, and consequently of His wishes relative to the human soul. This involved further a false conception of heaven and hell. As the popular Greek religion had been a material one, so the popular religion in the days of, and prior to, the Inquisition was likewise a material one, and its God endowed with material attributes. He was alleged to countenance torture, sacrifice, and all the concomitants of the Inquisition. Had Beethoven and Mendelssohn with their sympathy-diffusing music lived at a much earlier period of history, and had the hyper-moderns, with their music destructive of cruelty thought-forms, lived at the same period, we contend that the Inquisition's edicts and practices would have been greatly modified, if, indeed, they had come into existence at all.

Although vivisection has been mentioned in the same connection as the Inquisition, it should be added that compassion plays this much part in it—the majority of animals subjected to operations are at least chloroformed. Moreover, if music acted on the scientific mind as speedily and effectively as it acts on the religious and emotional, we go so far as to say that the idea of vivisection would never have materialised. That the practice is already falling into disrepute, and acquiring an increasingly greater number of opponents, is a further proof of the growth of human compassion, and that “true sympathy for and with,” which was lacking in the pre-Inquisitional days.

CHAPTER XXVIII

THE REFORMATION AND ITS CAUSES

COINCIDENT with the various events enumerated in the last chapter, there was one of considerable importance with which so far we have not dealt—it was the Reformation. As far back as the reign of Charlemagne some attempt had been made by Paulinus, Bishop of Aquileia, to reform the Church ; thereafter followed other attempts by Wickliffe (1360 in England), Huss (1405 in Bohemia), Luther (1517 in Germany), Calvin (1529 in France), and so on until 1526, when in practically every country in Europe the Reformation had become an accomplished fact.

The underlying cause of this is not far to seek : for it may be found in the increased development of the public mentality. The more people began to reason, the more they began to perceive the discrepancy between the teaching of the Church and the behaviour of its teachers, till finally they came to doubt the truth of those teachings themselves. It was this doubt which—we need hardly remind our readers—eventually gave rise to that second stage of the Reformation known as Protestantism.

Now the curious irony confronts us here that the Protestant religion was largely due to the music of the Roman Catholic churches ; for if we recall the effects of the plain-song which was still in use, we shall remember that they tended among other things to increase the reasoning faculties by causing men to think in a more orderly way. Thus a considerable number of people *had*

begun to reason—and in a manner inconveniently hostile to the Catholic Church ; they saw its glaring inconsistencies, and so embraced another faith. The upshot of this was the forming of two classes of States in Europe—those which had already embraced the new religion and those which had *not*. But after a conflict lasting from the commencement of the sixteenth century to the middle of the seventeenth, the Treaty of Westphalia (1648) was signed, and, thenceforth, both Catholic and Protestant States agreed to live in peace, despite the diversity of their religion.

Nevertheless, it were a fallacy to maintain that this treaty was prompted by genuine tolerance ; rather was it a question of expediency ; for history shows that the early Protestants had been as little tolerant as their opponents. They indulged in tyranny and persecution, and resorted to the most violent measures to repress what they were pleased to term heresy. Also, they were not by any means united, in that owing to a variety of differences connected with doctrinal opinions, they split up into a variety of sects. Not that such sectarianism was evil in itself—for it again resulted from the exercise of the reasoning faculties—but the violence with which one sect attacked another showed a complete ignorance of the true principles of mental liberty.

The Reformation, as every one knows, engendered manifold consequences ; for one thing by causing a general circulation of religious creeds, “ it awoke religion amidst the laity.” Hitherto, it had been entirely in the hands of the priests ; they alone were permitted to teach and preach it ; but *after* the Reformation a decided change occurred, and religion became, as it were, common property. Laymen discussed it, laymen—if they felt so inclined—taught and preached it. Yet even in spite of the Reformation, religion would not have played such an important part in the lives of a number of people had there

not been other agencies at work. If we look ahead to the time when religious persecution was no longer practised in its more virulent form—at any rate outside Spain and Italy—we must realise that fear of physical torture was not the determining cause of religion among the Protestants. True, fear of hell-fire may have had weight with many, but this notwithstanding, we find that large numbers of people embraced the various sectarian faiths from motives of conviction and religious need. In other words, we perceive manifold traces of the slow growth of spirituality, a fact substantiated by many biographies, confessions and writings relative to those times.

Now, during the course of a hundred years there were three composers born who exercised a marked effect on the spiritual-emotional nature of those sensitive enough to respond. The first of these composers was Orlandus Lassus, otherwise called Orlando de Lasso, a native of Mons, in Hainault; he lived from 1522 to 1595; the second was Palestrina, 1529-94; and the third was Monteverde who flourished around 1600.

Of Orlando de Lasso, it has been said: "He was the first great improver of figurative music, for instead of adhering to that stiff formal rule of counterpoint, from which some of his predecessors seemed afraid to deviate, he gave way to the introduction of elegant points and responsive passages finely wrought."¹

We need not, however, enlarge upon the technical qualities of those numerous Motets, sacred and secular, for which he became so celebrated throughout Europe²: it is with the *effects* of his music we are concerned.

He was the first European composer who was able to give to mankind a glimpse of the spiritual through the emotions, or, to phrase it otherwise, he so influenced by

¹ Sir John Hawkins, "History of Music."

² Although his name was Italianised, he spent very little of his life in Italy. He lived for the most part in Antwerp and Bavaria, where he died.

his music the emotional nature of those who responded to it, that they aspired to the attainment of pure Devotion, or what is termed God-like Love.¹ And we say advisedly *aspired*, for it is one thing to yearn towards the spiritual planes and another thing to reach them. That specific music calculated to induce Cosmic or God-consciousness—terms familiar to all mystics—has so far not appeared in Europe, though the creations of Richard Wagner were a considerable step towards it, as we have already seen. Indeed, he brought well-nigh to perfection the work which Orlando de Lasso had commenced and which Palestrina and Monteverde continued.

Of Palestrina, a contemporary has written: "This great genius guided by a peculiar faculty, the gift of God, adopted a style of harmony so elegant, so noble, so learned, so easy and so pleasing both to the connoisseur and the ignorant that in a Mass composed on purpose, sung before Pope Marcellus Cervinus and the sacred College of Cardinals, he made that pontiff alter his intention of enforcing the bull of John XXII., which abolished entirely church-music under the penalty of excommunication. This ingenious man, by his astonishing skill and the divine melody of that Mass, plainly convinced his holiness that those disagreeable jars between the music and the words so often heard in churches, were not owing to any defect in the art, but to want of skill in the composers. . . . This Mass is now, and ever will be, performed as long as there is a world, in the sacred temples of Rome, where they have been so fortunate as to secure the compositions of a genius whose works breathe divine harmony, and enable us to sing in a style so truly sublime the praises of our Maker."

It will be seen from the foregoing that not only was there a subtle spiritual quality in the music of Palestrina,

¹ The reader is reminded that Indian music brought about a somewhat similar effect, not *via* the emotions, but by a subtilisation of the *mind*.

but that he was instrumental in reintroducing music of a purer type into those churches in which, according to this writer, it had suffered at the hands of the unskilled. For that, despite the bull of John XXII.,¹ the use of music had not been abolished, there is ample evidence to show. We find, for instance, that between 141-443, Archbishop Chicheley organised the musical service of Canterbury Cathedral. Further, that in 1445 an organ costing £50 was given by Abbot Wheathamstead to St. Alban's Abbey. But still more evidential is the record of an inventory made in the same year at St. Paul's Cathedral, proving that in addition to plain-song books, there were also nine choir books,² a fact which goes to prove that although more elaborate and apparently less desirable compositions were used in the churches, they were used as well as, and not in place of, the plain-song. And we mention this in view of what we have previously said touching the Reformation and its cause—the growth of the mentality. Yet it should here be added that not only the plain-song but also, and in even greater measure, all polyphonic music of a serious type affects that growth. If we compare, for example, an aria of Donizetti—which consists of a melody and a very simple homophonic accompaniment—with a fugue of Bach, we observe that whereas the former merely titillates the senses, the latter calls for the exercise of the brain. Indeed, any form of counterpoint is a species of mathematics, and as Palestrina's music—for we now return to him—was largely contrapuntal, we find that in addition to those effects aforementioned he had a distinctly beneficial influence on the mentality. It was not that his music merely caused people to *think*, but owing to its effect on the higher emotional nature, to think in a more spiritual way : it was their emotions which, so to speak, directed the course of their thought. The German

¹ John XXII. was elected Pope in 1316, and died in 1334.

² See Henry Davey, "History of English Music."

historian Ranke, even implies that Palestrina's music—notably the Mass composed in 1560—had almost immediate results; it revived religion and instituted an epoch of devotion. And certainly there is much to be said for this view, seeing that those scandals which hitherto had disgraced the Roman Catholic Church began to disappear, and a true reformation, though not a schism, occurred through all ecclesiastical grades.

Yet we must not expect to find such speedy *universal* results from Palestrina's musical inspirations, for the simple reason that it is more difficult to awaken true spirituality in mankind *en masse* than to awaken any other quality. All the same, Lasso, Palestrina,¹ and finally Monteverde—whose work we need not analyse in view of its similarity of effect—were, through their music, instrumental in preparing the way for a certain number of mystics, poets and philosophers who appeared after the sixteenth century: they also, as already implied, were responsible for the engendering of a more sincere and devotional type of religious feeling in a great many individuals, both of the Catholic and the Protestant persuasions.

Before completing this study of the Reformation, there is a particular form of music which should be mentioned, and which came into existence towards the end of the fifteenth, or at the latest the beginning of the sixteenth century. For this form, which is known as the fugue, played a considerable if indirect part in the formation of those various sects which arose all over Europe with the advent of Protestantism. We have touched upon this subject—*i.e.*, sectarianism—some pages back, but it were now well to enlarge upon it. We will first, however, for the benefit of laymen, quote a few explanatory words relating to the fugue itself.

Arising from the Latin word *Fuga*, it is “a species of symphonic composition, in which a certain air, point or

¹ See Notes (10).

subject, is propounded by one part and prosecuted by another . . .”¹ In the conventional pianoforte fugue of to-day, the subject is given out, say, by the left hand, then immediately followed a fifth above by the right hand, while the left hand continues with a suitable contrapuntal accompaniment. This is the simplest type of two-part fugue, but there are, of course, others of far greater complexity, dealing with four or even more parts. Now the invention of Fugue, being the most mentally stimulating of all musical forms hitherto devised, exercised a far greater influence upon the development of intellect than that of any European music prior to the end of the fifteenth century. The result was that by degrees more and more people began to use their reasoning powers in every direction. They were no longer content to accept, without question, such religious tenets as tradition had handed down, or that were propounded by Protestant clergy. They found flaws in this and that argument; they objected to this and that doctrine; they were unable to endorse this and that opinion, and as the natural outcome a multiplicity of sects came into being. The Reformation, although, so to speak, it unloosed the fetters of thought, was not the prime cause of sectarianism; because, however much we may permit a man to use his mental faculties, he will not, and cannot do so unless he has developed those faculties in the first place. Admitted that Protestantism was brought about—as certainly was the case—by the exercise of the reason on the part of a great number of people, it would have remained at that had not intellectuality continued to develop. The populace would have accepted it without questioning, as they had previously accepted Catholicism. But as it was, sects sprang up with an astonishing frequency all over Europe, and continued to do so until their number almost baffles the historian.

¹ Hawkins, “History of Music.”

In concluding this chapter, which has been largely devoted to the effects of mental development, a few words should be added relative to that development along non-religious lines. For, as every educated person knows, science and philosophy were in process of evolution since about the fourteenth century—that is, some hundred years after the invention of polyphonic music. That the latter was directly responsible for scientific discoveries, such as that of printing or of gunpowder, we do not by any means contend ; but we *do* contend that its vibrations, by affecting the mentality, helped to render the minds of philosophers, inventors and scientists more receptive to ideas ; further—and this is more important—that music helped humanity to accept those ideas, or, as in the case of inventions, the outcome of them once they had been conceived. For instance, if the desire for literature had not been instilled into the human mind, the invention of printing would have proved as useless as many a game which has been invented and never found favour with the public. As we all know, there are plenty of people, even nowadays, who confess that they “never read a book ” because they prefer to spend their free time in watching football-matches, or in playing golf or bridge. Moreover, it would seem that prior to 1441 the majority of Europeans similarly preferred other pursuits to that of reading, although in that year a decree was passed at Venice, proving that the art of printing had already been known for some time.¹ In short, it was the increased mental development of the people which at length prompted them to avail themselves of the advantages of the printing-press—they began to desire knowledge. And what has been said in connection with the printing-press applies equally to other discoveries and ideas, whether scientific or philosophical.

¹ In China it had been practised for nearly 2,000 years.

CHAPTER XXIX

THE MUSIC OF THE SEVENTEENTH AND EIGHTEENTH CENTURIES AND THE FRENCH REVOLUTION

AT Naples in 1649 was born Alessandro Scarlatti, described as the greatest of Neapolitan composers, and one of the most prolific, seeing that he wrote 200 Masses, 100 operas, and over 400 cantatas, besides a large number of motets, psalms, sacred concertos and madrigals. As regards his operas, the way had been prepared for him by Monteverde, whom we mentioned in our last chapter as carrying on the work of Palestrina, and who is considered to be "the father of the theatric style," and one of the inventors of *recitative*. Nevertheless, although Scarlatti acquired considerable renown from his many operas, he was greatest in his sacred works. Being a clever contrapuntalist, "he united to the grand polyphonic technique of the previous century the best of those momentous new art-elements and skilful contrivances—the monody, music-drama and oratorio—and infused the tonal art with a vitality which has remained to our day. The old polyphonic forms which constituted the framework of his compositions were hidden under beautiful melody and skilfully interwoven with vocal parts . . ." the result being "the growth of a new and vigorous Church style of music, which rapidly gained adherents amongst musicians, and soon found the favour of the people."¹

To understand the effects of Alessandro Scarlatti's music, one must take into account the character of the

¹ See Emil Naumann, "History of Music," p. 573.

Neapolitans—a passionate, uncontrolled, gay and superstitious race, in whom religion inspired fear more than any loftier sentiment. Thus the Church and the Home, so to speak, were not co-ordinated; they existed as things apart; the Neapolitan went to church because he feared the consequences of staying away; he feared for his soul; he still held the “bargain and barter” idea of religion; he set forth to his religious duties as a man sets forth to transact a rather irksome business, and he did not bring religion back with him to his home. When by attending Mass he had, so to speak, “compensated God for his transgressions,” religion had served its purpose for the time being, and was to the best of his ability forgotten.

But the music of Alessandro Scarlatti tended to bring about a change in this: he effected it through his melodiousness. “The severe harsh outline of the forms used by some of the old canonical contrapuntalists was softened by free graceful melody.”¹ Through the combination of the religious element in his music and the lure of his melodies, he made religion itself more attractive, and won over the hearts of the melody-loving Neapolitans. To word it concisely, he co-ordinated the Church and the Home. Nor were the methods he, however unconsciously, adopted difficult of comprehension. People came back from Mass with their hearts touched and his melodies “ringing in their ears,” and this in turn affected the mind and the soul. Gradually their whole attitude towards the Church and religion became altered, and, instead of associating the latter with fear, they began to associate it with beauty—the music of Scarlatti had fulfilled its mission.

Yet although with his compositions he attained such heights, after his death in 1725 both the style of Church music he had created and the *opera seria* began to decline. By giving melody the most prominent place he paved the

¹ See Emil Naumann, “History of Music,” p. 573.

way for that inevitable degeneracy of dramatic truth and musical expression which set in around that time. "The famous solo singers who later appeared before the public, made melody a mere peg on which to hang their virtuoso artifices . . . thus degrading the musical drama to a stage concert, with no higher aim than the exhibition of the vocal skill of the expert."¹ All the same, without Alessandro Scarlatti and his melodiousness there could have been no Gluck or Mozart, for the former's success was due to "the combination of melody and Florentine rhetoric, the latter's to the union of both melody and rhetoric with Teutonic harmony"² and form, a matter with which, however, we shall briefly deal in its proper place.

For we have here to consider the son of an illustrious father, namely, Domenico Scarlatti, born 1685, died in 1757. He is described as the greatest solo performer on the harpsichord of his period, a description which may well be true, judging from the large number of *bravura* works he wrote for that instrument, many of which are played by pianists of the present time. Among his other achievements he is credited with "perfecting the Sonata form," which hitherto had been restricted almost entirely to works for the violin; but as to this, it were more correct to say that he greatly improved it, seeing that even with Beethoven it had not reached the limit of its potentialities.³

The effect of Domenico Scarlatti's charming rippling music must be so apparent to those who have heard any of his compositions that only a few words on the subject seem necessary. Yet, in contemplating that effect—one of bringing happiness and exhilaration into the lives of individuals—we must not forget that Scarlatti's music

¹ See Emil Naumann, "History of Music," p. 573.

² *Ibid.*

³ Domenico Scarlatti wrote several operas which have sunk into oblivion.

sounded rather different to his contemporaries from what it does to us. Our palates have grown accustomed to the more sparkling wine of Chopin, whose compositions in a certain sense were an elaboration of his predecessor's. If we can imagine ourselves living at the beginning of the eighteenth century and hearing for the first time "those rippling cascades of notes," to use an expressive musical *cliché*, we may gain some idea of the influence which Scarlatti exercised in his day. As people had come home from hearing the Masses of his father, with the beauty of their melodies uplifting the soul, so did they come home from a performance of his son's works conscious of an extraordinary feeling of exhilaration and happiness highly conducive—in persons so constituted—to the expression of humour and wit. But it should be added that in themselves the harpsichord, clavecin and spinet, in short, any instrument in which metallic strings were *plucked*, tended, especially when employed for florid sparkling music, to the increase of mordant wit and brilliance. It is to the above-mentioned instruments, or rather to their effects upon the mind that we owe much of that generous legacy of eighteenth-century sharp-pointed humour to be found in greatest abundance in the works of Voltaire, and to a lesser degree in those of his contemporaries. As already stated, polyphonic music, *per se*, stimulates the intellect; add to polyphony "effervescence," scintillation, and the somewhat stinging effects of plucked strings, and the result is intellect employed in caustic utterance, or satirical wit. Indeed, after the disappearance of the harpsichord, that particular type of satirical wit also began to disappear.¹ With the advent of the pianoforte and its mellower tone—produced by *striking* instead of plucking the strings—a less caustic type of humour came into

¹ The less biting species to be found in the celebrated French *Salons* was much influenced by the graceful dance-forms written under the title of "Suites for Clavecin," by "Couperin le Grand," as he was called. He was born in 1668 and died in 1773.

being ; it had lost its specific "bite," whatever other characteristics it may still have retained.

To return to Domenico Scarlatti : *his* music exclusively cannot be said to have had an influence on the nation as a whole, but simply to have brought happiness and enlivenment to those numerous individuals who heard it. Nevertheless, though its effects were limited, they were perhaps more immediate than those of any musician we have previously examined. It is a general rule that the more facile and exhilarating a type of music, the more immediate, and also ephemeral, its effects. For this reason we find that all those tuneful, hence easily comprehensible clavecin and harpsichord composers, whom we need not mention, but of whom Scarlatti was the most "fluent," exercised *en masse* an almost immediate effect upon their epoch, whereas Beethoven's music, for example, took about a hundred years to reach the plenitude of its influence. Still, of even the profounder music, it is correct to say that the more it is disseminated, the sooner will be apparent its influence upon the nation. In the earliest days of European music, we have seen that it took even longer to bear moral and spiritual fruit than it does at the present time, and this, because its use was practically restricted to the Churches ; moreover, it was of a far less powerful type. But as nowadays there is hardly a moment when somewhere in the Western hemisphere a concert is not taking place, the results are less tardy.

Bearing in mind, then, the comparatively rapid results of the more superficial music, we shall understand the partial causes of a phase of life we will now examine—namely, that effeminacy in male attire and manners which was so pronounced a feature of the eighteenth century. Already during the lifetime of Alessandro Scarlatti, we find the commencement in the tonal art of *Zopf* which, as already stated relative to Greece, means the elaboration of one side of artistic activity at the expense of

all others . . . "the predominance of the unreal, the incidental and external over the real, the essential, the internal."¹ Its insignia in music are shakes, runs and variations ; its insignia in life are affectations, adornment, "bowings and scrapings" and "frills and furbelows." Nor have we far to seek for its underlying cause : it is the "gentler side of life" carried to extremes and degenerated almost to caricature. Musically speaking, it began with the romantic type of folk-song, was elaborated in the days of the elder Scarlatti, and reached its culmination in the works of Mozart, 1756-91. Indeed, with the exception of J. S. Bach and Handel,² nearly all the composers who wrote from the time of A. Scarlatti to that of Mozart were through their works responsible either for the elaboration of "the gentler side of life," or for the increase of wit, as already mentioned. But Mozart actually *expressed* that gentler side in terms of music ; nay more : he was the musical interpreter *par excellence* of all the little vanities of the daily round, as was also his contemporary, Joseph Haydn.³ The two were in many ways so similar, that it is unnecessary to study them separately, as far as the purpose of this book is concerned. They were even alike in the immediate fame they acquired for themselves, seeing that after the production of *Idomeneo* Mozart was hailed as the "greatest of all musicians," while Haydn "caused the utmost possible excitement" among the English musical public when he produced six of his "Twelve Grand Symphonies" in 1791.

Yet—startling contrast—just two years before Joseph Haydn was enthralling London audiences by his ex-

¹ See Naumann, "Music in the History of Civilisation." Also Chapter XXIV.

² See *ante*.

³ This does not apply to his Cantatas, but to his symphonic, chamber music, etc. The "Creation" and the "Seasons" had a somewhat similar effect to Handel's works.

hilarating "vanities," the French Revolution commenced, and three years later the prisons were broken open and 12,000 persons, including 100 priests, were massacred. It is evident, therefore, that in France, at any rate, forces were at work which no amount of "immediately fascinating" music was capable of counteracting.

But, of course, the display of cruelty was a by-product of the Revolution, and not its cause. As the student is aware, there hardly existed a government so radically and intrinsically bad as the French Government in the eighteenth century. "A supreme and irresponsible control was exercised over the whole country by the clergy, the nobles and the crown. Not only were the lower classes despised, enslaved and reduced to abject poverty, but the intellect of France was placed under the ban of a ruthless proscription, its literature prohibited and burned, its authors plundered and imprisoned."¹ Any person, for instance, who wrote a book attacking religion or likely to excite the public mind was served with the penalty of death. It is none the less a noteworthy fact that the revolutionary literature which finally overthrew all the institutions of France was at first directed against those which were religious rather than political. In fine, the general trend among the intellects of France was due to scepticism; and even the Abbé, by the way, who was Voltaire's first teacher, made no disguise of his own unbelief, and inculcated it into his pupil. If the Church exercised its despotic power, it was certainly not due to religious sincerity, but to more sordid motives: the control and subjugation of the people.

Now, if we turn to French musical history, we find the significant fact that towards the end of the Renaissance period a remarkable change had taken place in France, where previously "Church music had reigned supreme. Organists, choir-boys, trained to chant strict *a capella*

¹ Buckle's "History of Civilisation in England."

song, were supplanted by singers who performed their *rôles* in the costliest of garments, and by dancers decked out in multicoloured ribbons, accompanied by an orchestra of profane instruments.”¹ Thus there finally came a day when although in Italy the elevating Masses of Alessandro Scarlatti were disseminating religion, in France the tinkling and contrastingly frivolous strains of the clavecin composers were merely inspiring caustic wit and satirical brilliance. But even prior to this, the eminent Giovanni Battista Lulli, a Tuscan by birth, who resided in Paris, had spread abroad the worldly effects of his many pleasing and tuneful sarabandes, courantes and gigue.

We see, then, that the French music which at one time had inspired religious thinking had practically disappeared, and with its disappearance thought had become diverted into other channels—either the very reverse of religious, or, still worse, religious only in name, but mundane and despotic in actuality. The result was a conflict between a sincere scepticism and an insincere Church—a conflict in which on the one side all the notable writers arrayed themselves to attempt the overthrow of “spiritual” despotism, and, on the other, the clergy fought to retain the power they were loth to renounce. Yet that was only the first stage in the conflict; the second was the attempt of subsequent notable writers to overthrow secular despotism, the ultimate outcome being the Revolution. It were well, however, to quote a passage from Buckle relative to the early causes of this crisis, for it reflects a particularly clear light upon the subject.

“It is evident that in the legitimate progress of a nation political innovations should keep pace with religious innovations, so that the people may increase their liberty while they diminish their superstition. In

¹ See Naumann’s “History of Music,” Chapter XIX.

France, on the contrary, during nearly forty years, the Church was attacked and the government was spared. The consequence was that the order and balance of the country were destroyed; the minds of men became habituated to the most daring speculations, while their acts were controlled by the most oppressive despotism; and they felt themselves possessed of capacities which their rulers would not allow them to employ. When, therefore, the French Revolution broke out, it was not a mere rising of ignorant slaves against educated masters, but it was a rising of men in whom the despair caused by slavery was quickened by the resources of advancing knowledge; men who were in that frightful condition when the progress of intellect outstrips the progress of liberty, and when a desire is felt, not only to remove a tyranny, but also to avenge an insult."

It will be evident from the above that we may reduce the outbreak of the Revolution to two factors: the decay of religion and the general growth of the mentality.¹ Why religion decayed was, as already implied, because religious music disappeared and was superseded by a more worldly type; why the mentality developed is obvious. For even those who are not prepared to admit the part that music plays in educating the mind must admit that mental growth is one of the natural results of evolution.

¹ See notes (11).

CHAPTER XXX

A CURSORY VIEW OF MUSICAL EFFECTS IN ENGLAND FROM THE PRE-ELIZABETHAN DAYS TO THOSE OF HANDEL

IT so happens that England and English literature were to an enormous, if indirect, extent responsible for the French Revolution. Only in England could be found a literature which satisfied those bold and enquiring thinkers who appeared in France after the death of Louis XIV. Yet although the influence of our philosophers and political and scientific writers was not to induce universal religious scepticism in this country, when transferred to France it, on the contrary, undermined religion itself. If our English people objected to some religious institution, they waged war against the institution, but not against the religion of which it was but an accident or by-product. Not so the French ; they attacked what they considered to be the cause—Christianity and the Bible.

We have now among other things to consider from a musical point of view why this attitude towards religion was so widely different in the two countries, and the cause which finally occasioned that difference in the eighteenth century. But to this end we must travel far back to the time when John Dunstable systematised polyphony.

It will be remembered that the invention of polyphony gave a very considerable impetus to the mental faculties, and that, broadly speaking, if employed in the composition of solemn pieces it induced serious thinking, and if in lighter pieces, "cleverness" and wit. A marked advance was made in both secular and sacred polyphonic music

until about 1450, then there came a period of weakness until about 1480, when a prodigious evolution in three kinds of music took place, viz. : in Church music (solemn), Madrigals (varied, *i.e.*, both grave and gay), Chamber-music (light and pleasing). In the latter type the virginal¹ was employed—a plucked metal-stringed instrument which preceded the invention of the harpsichord ; it was less powerful than the harpsichord, but nevertheless produced some of the same effects. Other instruments employed were lutes and viols, usually to be found in sets corresponding to alto, tenor and bass. And it does not require a great effort of the imagination to realise their effect. With their mellow, rather sensuous tones, they awoke the more poetic sentiments in the heart ; while, in conjunction with the plucked strings of the lute and virginal, they inspired “cleverness,” and hence the production of those “pretty conceits” which are so marked a feature of nearly all lyrical poetry. As to the Madrigals, whether grave or gay, who has not experienced the effects of their quaint graceful melodiousness when sung by the Oriana choir ?

To summarise : first and foremost we have Church music, productive of Thought in the higher sense of the word, and its results—drama, philosophy, etc.—then the Madrigals, inspiring either grace, gaiety or “sweet sadness” ; and, finally, we have the Chamber-music, inspiring wit and poetic sentiments. Combine all these elements, and we realise whence arose the Elizabethan age, with its array of playwrights, poets, its brilliance, happiness and monumental productivity. Nor in making this statement are we overlooking the large part played by the influence of Italy during this era—Italy, with its poetry and romances, its manners and customs. That

¹ It has been supposed that the virginal was so termed after Elizabeth, the “ Virgin Queen,” because she was a skilled performer on it, but, as it is mentioned under that name in manuscripts pre-dating her epoch, the supposition is not tenable.

the literature of Italy, that even its picturesque dress and speech "became objects of almost passionate admiration,"¹ is well known; but, for one thing, how did that admiration come into being, and for another, could mere admiration in itself produce literary genius, and especially on so large a scale? Nobody can suppose that because Shakespeare admired Boccaccio—and to the extent of dramatising some of his romances—he became the universal genius he is acknowledged to be. If such were the case, then every enthusiastic amateur of music, for example, would develop into a famous composer. Although taste may determine the particular type of productivity, it cannot in itself engender capacity, still less talent or genius. Hence, to say that the brilliance, literary and otherwise, of the Elizabethan age was due to Italy and Italian influence, is to confound cause and effect. As no amount of brilliance in others can transform a dullard into a savant, so no amount of brilliance in Italy² could have transformed the English into what they were during the Elizabethan epoch.

We have now to deal with an instrument which has exercised a marked influence on the people of this country for several centuries—we allude to the organ. There is ample historical evidence to show that already in 951 a huge organ was built at Winchester, and that by the time of Henry VII. there must have been a large number of organs—though comparatively small ones—to be found all over England. The spiritual effect of this instrument is that of bringing the Great Unseen nearer to the human heart; it constitutes, as it were, a bridge between the world of matter and the world of Spirit. The more obvious effects, however, are to induce an atmosphere of austere grandeur, of exalted magnificence. But this, of

¹ See J. R. Green, "History of the English People."

² Some historians mention France, not Italy, but whether it was the one or the other, or both, is immaterial so far as our argument is concerned.

course, applies to the elaborate organs capable of producing an enormous volume of sound ; the effect of the small species, on the other hand, is to induce that austere religiosity or piety which comes under the heading of Puritanism.

If we dismiss for a moment what has been said about the Madrigals and the Elizabethan Chamber-music and their influence, and try to imagine the state of mind of any person who heard and desired to hear nothing but organ music, we must perforce imagine a very one-sided personality. Although he might be serene and contented, he would be averse to anything in the form of gaiety or the harmless frivolities of life. If he loved the beautiful, it would be the severe type, the sombre-hued grandeur—the type which inspired reverence and awe, but not exhilaration and felicitous love. Now although it is safe to say that hardly a person exists who has heard no other music but that of the organ, there are some who admit that alone the “king of instruments,” as they call it, has the power to move them : such persons obviously existed in the time of Henry VIII. They will have heard the charming Madrigals, and the equally charming Chamber-music, but to neither of these did they respond ; only sacred music affected their austere natures, only to sacred music did their emotional organisms vibrate.

We have already maintained elsewhere that the same cause does not always produce the same effect, and in the subject under consideration we find a further instance of this truth. The musical agency which induces profound philosophical speculation of a spiritual nature in one temperament may merely induce religious austerity and Puritanism in another. It is partly for this reason that the beginnings of Puritanism arose in an otherwise non-Puritanical age : the rest may be understood from history. For it is known that the Puritans influenced the Church and Society from within, not from without,

and only became a political power when the offence of Charles I. against the Constitution compelled them to oppose force to force. And if it be asked why the Puritanical spirit eventually took such a hold upon the nation, the answer is that it was but a temporary hold, and, for the most part, actuated by political motives. It was owing to this that the gay influences of the secular music were for the time being impotent to counteract it. That it might have lasted longer if the Puritan forces had pursued a different policy we do not doubt ; but, strange to say, they suppressed the very forces which moulded and sustained the whole movement. Instead of suppressing the secular, they suppressed the Church music,¹ and especially the use of organs ; the result was that during the whole of the Commonwealth anti-Puritan music was spreading its influence abroad. Thus alone the psychological moment was needed for it to come into fullest manifestation—that moment was when Charles II. entered Whitehall. It was then that the whole temper of England was suddenly changed, then that the extraordinary revulsion of feeling occurred which proved that the Puritanical movement had been a superimposed condition and not an inherent necessity of the national heart. At that moment . . . “All that was noblest and best of Puritanism was whirled away with its pettiness and tyranny in the current of the national hate. . . . Religion had been turned into a system of political and social oppression, and it fell with its fall. Godliness became a by-word of scorn ; sobriety in dress, in speech, in manners, was flouted as a mark of detested Puritanism.”²

It seems hardly necessary to remind our readers of the deplorable state of Society after the fall of the Puritans. Yet, in order to emphasise the disastrous results which

¹ It has been conclusively proved that the Commonwealth was a most brilliant period for secular music. See Henry Davey, “History of Music.”

² J. R. Green, “History of the English People.”

accrue when the soberising influences of the organ and Church music are suppressed and the lighter type has full sway, we may quote an additional sentence from Green's History. "Duelling and raking," he writes, "became the marks of a fine gentleman : and grave divines winked at the follies of 'honest fellows' who fought, gambled, swore, drank, and ended a day of debauchery by a night in the gutter." Much may also be gleaned from the comedies of the day, which were but a reflection of the prevalent vice of the time, and which treated of "seduction, intrigue, brutality, cynicism and debauchery." The perverted gaiety of the times, however, was in part responsible for one fortunate resolve—that of re-establishing musical services in the churches. No longer were the people content with the unspeakable gloominess of worship without the enlivening adjunct of the organ and choir ; and so among other institutions we find that the Corporation of Music which Charles I. had established was again set up. We also find during this period the names of several composers associated with the composition of sacred and organ music. But especially should that of Henry Purcell be noted, not only on account of his genius, but because of the soberising effect his work came to have upon the nation ; an effect which was so greatly enhanced later on by George Frederick Handel.

The characteristics of Purcell's style may easily be summed up : he contrived in a masterly fashion to add "the sweetness of Italian melody to the severer beauty of Elizabethan counterpoint." Thus at one and the same time his music stirred the gentler emotions and affected the mentality. Indeed, his sacred compositions, of which there were a large number, had a somewhat similar effect upon the English people as had those of Alessandro Scarlatti upon the Italians : they served to render religion more attractive. It is related that "whenever Purcell's 'Te Deum' was performed, the church was packed to

overflowing," a circumstance which requires no comment. There was in Purcell's music an element which delighted its hearers, and, at the same time, aroused in them a certain measure of awe. Listening to that combination of voices, orchestra and organ, which in his larger works he employed, they felt as if under the spell of something religiously magnificent. It is therefore Purcell to whom one must give a meed of credit for those characteristics of the Victorian age which have their foundation in awe and reverence, and for which Handel's influence was so largely responsible.

Our brief survey of English music from the pre-Elizabethan days to the time of Handel is now complete ; and we are in a position to understand why the attitude towards religion in this country was so widely divergent from that in France. Except during the short period of the Commonwealth, sacred, and especially organ music, has always inspired religious thought, and, therefore, the influence of those sceptic philosophers who appeared from time to time, never gained a hold, as they did in France, on the public at large. That society did not live up to the moral standards which religion ordains is true, but, as we have elsewhere implied, religion and nobility of character are by no means inseparable. We only require to read an autobiography like Benvenuto Cellini's to realise how correct is this statement, and how people express sincere "gratitude to God for all His mercy and goodness to them," while at the same time seeming utterly blind to the necessity of "keeping His Commandments." And so, however depraved the state of society after the Restoration, Christianity itself was never uprooted from the national soil, as it likewise was never uprooted from the national soil of Germany. In fact, Luther, being a musician himself, took every step to ensure the continuance of sacred music, especially in the form of the *chorale* and congregational singing. Organ-playing was also much

cultivated in the days prior to the fame of J. S. Bach ; so that only in France did sacred music become a negligible quantity ; the little there was being swamped by those incredible puerilities, "soprano men, howling women and buffoonery,"¹ which constituted a feature of the operatic style.

¹ Such was Rousseau's description.

CONCLUDING REFLECTIONS

THE future of music is a subject which invites much speculation along various lines ; for although John Stuart Mill even in *his* day, voiced the fear that it must ere long come to the end of its possibilities, it has not as yet reached maturity, let alone its decline. Some persons, in fact, employ an easy catch-phrase to the effect that it is still in its infancy, as if it had been "born" some few centuries ago instead of in prehistoric times. These persons, nevertheless, give us no clue to the features it will assume when it has reached "youth" and finally "manhood." If we consider that the modern orchestra consists of 120 performers or more, are we to suppose that in, say, another 200 years it will consist of twice that number, and later on of four times the number, and so forth, *ad infinitum* ? The answer must perforce be in the negative, because there is, one would imagine, a limit to aural endurance, especially if we pre-suppose the addition of vast choruses. Then along what lines is it profitable to speculate as to the musical future ? Perchance the Past, and, to some extent, the Present, will afford us an indication.

A comparison between Scriabin's and Tschaikowsky's method of producing *fortissimo* effects is unfavourable to the latter musician. He sought to impress his hearers by the use—and an injudicious one—of percussion instruments ; Scriabin, on the other hand, by an overwhelming and awe-inspiring volume of sound. With Scriabin, notably at the end of *Prometheus*, the organ was brought into requisition, thus adding *sound* to sound, not *noise* to

sound, as with Tschaikowsky; and the result was euphonious magnificence, not a jarring banality suggestive of a pyrotechnical bombardment. It would, therefore, seem that along the line of greater and purer tone-volume—within limits, of course—we must look for one of the future characteristics of music. This is not to say that percussion instruments will be discarded entirely, but that they will be of a more euphony-producing type. After all, the piano is a percussion instrument, and its possibilities are by no means exhausted, as Mr. Emanuel Moor has proved by his invention of a Two-Manual Pianoforte.¹ This would be a most valuable adjunct to an orchestra, because by the manipulation of a *stop* the whole action can be changed to that of the harpsichord; in addition, there is a simple device enabling the performance of chromatic *glissandos*. In the Xylophone and Glockenspiel we also see possibilities of great improvement, for, like the Celesta and Dulcitone, they ought, in order to admit of greater dexterity, to be fitted with keyboards. Another useful percussion instrument might be devised consisting of sixteen very small drums so tuned as to form an octave, after the manner of some of those instruments to be found among primitive races. With tubular bells every orchestral concert-goer is familiar; and yet these are of little value as long as they are limited to eight—that is to say, tuned diatonically instead of chromatically. With regard to gongs, these are more limited still, only one or, at best, two forming part of even the most modern orchestral equipment.

To turn from percussion instruments to the modern organ—this latter has undergone such marked improvements of late years that the most exquisite sound-combinations may be produced from it. But so far the orchestral

¹ This consists of two keyboards, one above the other, the second and upper keyboard being tuned an octave below the first, thus enabling the performer to play octaves, tenths and larger intervals with the greatest ease. Further, there is octave coupling, as on the organ.

composer has been content to use it conjointly with the orchestra in what we may term its most organesque form—he has not singled out the timbre produced by various *stops* and employed them as single instruments. If one considers what entrancing “far-away” effects might be obtained from the echo-organ in conjunction with the orchestra, or during an orchestral pause, it seems strange that no composer has utilised them. But then the difficulty is that so few concert-halls are equipped with really up-to-date organs, and, consequently, our musicians are chary of writing for specific effects. We nevertheless hazard the prophecy that in the future the organ will be employed to much greater advantage.

Yet apart from the organ, the orchestra itself allows of increased variety. At present the tendency is to double or treble our wind-instruments rather than to vary them, and this imposes a limitation of orchestral colouring which need not exist. Instead of two players blowing precisely the same type of instrument, if they each played a different one the tone-colour possibilities would be vastly increased.

And then there is the human voice and its treatment. Until recently, Western composers have been liable to forget that the voice can do other things than straightforward singing—it can hum, and so produce *bouche fermée* effects; it might even be used to produce nasal sounds, as in oriental vocalisation. But voice-treatment seems to have been more circumscribed by conventions than any other medium of musical expression, and choral-writing has been moulded far too much after prescribed patterns—either polyphonic, homophonic or declamatory. Owing to the supposed advantages of “contrary motion” in part writing—advantages which the pedagogues of the last generation impressed upon their pupils—the possibilities of Descant had been forgotten, until Debussy re-introduced them in a different form. Yet what is more beautiful, more ethereal than female voices moving in

similar motion in chords ? How exaltedly exquisite Mr. Holst's "Celestial Choir" in the final number of his *Planets*—"Neptune"—as that choir gradually fades away into the distance ! Indeed, through this device of his one realises that choral effects in use on, or rather *behind* the operatic stage, are far too seldom introduced into concert-music. Echo-organs have been constructed, therefore why can we not have echo-choirs and echo-orchestras ? It merely needs some electrical contrivance by which the conductor's movements could be seen behind the platform. It is not even too much to anticipate that the concert-halls of the future may be equipped with some such contrivance. Even a hidden quartet of strings suddenly heard while the orchestra pauses for a few moments could produce a most ethereally poetic contrast.

We have pointed out how Debussy for one has re-introduced that device of the past known as Descant, and we may confidently expect to see in the course of time the reappearance of another discarded device—if so it can be termed—namely, the third-tone of ancient Egyptian music, as also the quarter-tone of the Indian scale. To utilise these, however, we must possess the requisite instruments—merely to sharpen or flatten our strings is not advisable ; moreover it limits the playing of quarter- or third-tones to stringed instruments. But that with the growing subtilisation of music these divisions of the tone are eventually bound to appear, we do not doubt ; they will be the necessary concomitant of that subtilisation of rhythm already noticeable in the works of some of our modern composers. It is just the lack of the quarter- and third-tones which makes these composers so afraid of writing melody—the result would be too unsubtle. Yet melody must return sooner or later, if in a less obvious form. Judging from the Past, it is as much an integral part of music as metre and rhyme are of poetry. For countless centuries—since the Vedic times—poets have

rhymed and scanned ; is it, therefore, conceivable that *vers libre* has come to remain ? The ingenuity of a great poet consists not in *discarding* metre, but in inventing new ones, and the same applies to the musician. Wagner, perhaps the greatest of all innovators, discarded neither melody, harmony nor form : he evolved new ones to suit his own purpose.

To discard is easy, to invent is difficult.

But the foregoing merely deals with the means and their outward *musical* effects, not with the inner, the spiritual, mental and emotional. That the appearance of the quarter-tone would greatly spiritualise the Western peoples will be evident to those who have accepted our statements relative to Indian music and its influence. Thus it would endow them with wisdom without depriving them of their practicality. Again the third-tone, through its specific effect on the *emotional body* and its power to loosen that particular sheath of the soul, would aid Mankind in deriving first-hand knowledge of the Emotional Plane, as it so aided the ancient Egyptians. That is to say, it would induce *trance*—yet not that *sub-conscious* trance from which a man returns as from sleep with no memory of his experiences out of the body, but that *superconscious* trance from which a man comes back revived, ecstatic, with the full memory of his “celestial holiday.” For this temporary trance-condition is the birthright of every one, as Vivekananda wrote in his book on the Science of Raja Yoga—this power to visit the Higher Planes being latent in each of us. Nevertheless, until Man has acquired sufficient wisdom and practicality, it were not well to bring that power into general manifestation, as he would neglect the duties of earth for the pleasures of “heaven.”¹ And so, only when the time

¹ This is what sometimes occurs with those people who possess this faculty ; being able to induce trance whenever they wish, they sacrifice their earthly affairs to the lure of the higher planes, and so become indolent and hopelessly unpractical.

is ripe will the third-tone become a factor in Western music. Moreover, when its effects will have become fully operative, all apprehension of death will fade from human consciousness ; for then, not only will Man be able to visit the after-life planes while still in the body, but in so doing be able to commune with such loved ones as have already passed into these spheres. This is, of course, possible to all Adepts, and even to the lesser degree Initiates now, in that these have accelerated their personal evolution by special training ; yet, as the general run of mankind is not prepared to undergo that training, it must be content to take the "long spiral road " to the summit of Knowledge. But even so, each year human beings are discovering some strange and marvellous faculty within themselves ; and as we write the concluding chapters of this study, Monsieur Jules Romains' remarkable book on "Eye-less Sight " has been put into our hands. Thirty years ago, if any one had affirmed that people could learn to see with their *skin*, even the undeniable proofs adduced by Monsieur Romains would most likely have met with nothing but a contemptuous smile. Yet he who has studied the ancient philosophy of the *Tattwas* ¹ will evince no surprise, nor would he if he learned that it was possible also to *hear* with the skin : for Man as yet knows strangely little about his own organism. The trouble would seem to be that there is too much specialism in the world, too many water-tight compartments where Knowledge in its broadest sense is concerned. The scientist who makes excursions into the province of religion or the unseen is looked upon as lost—witness the opprobrium cast at one time upon Sir William Crookes—the artist who wanders into the field of science is similarly looked upon, and the result is a retardation of progress. And yet to elaborate a significant remark of Monsieur Romains' : when two methods of obtaining

¹ See "Nature's Finer Forces," by Rama Prasad, M.A.

knowledge which seemed to be eternally unrelated suddenly meet, a discovery flashes out from the encounter ; and, what is more, the further removed these sciences from one another, the more momentous the discovery. But are we to leave such encounters to chance or ungratefully and adversely to criticise those who attempt to co-ordinate all branches of knowledge ? The answer is that until Mankind begins to understand the principle of Unity, so, with few exceptions, will it be. Of that principle Richard Wagner sounded the note ; it remains for the music of the future to elaborate, vary and bring it to perfection. Although Wagner drew upon the musical resources of last century, what were they in comparison with those we may expect from the present century and the centuries to come ? What volume and infinite shades of tone-colour may we not anticipate when manifold new instruments have been devised and the subtler divisions of the tone have once more been brought into requisition ? So far, with our earthly music we have only been able to imitate the faintest echo of the Music of the Spheres, but, in the future, it will be given us to swell the great Cosmic Symphony. In that unimaginable Unity-Song is the synthesis of Love, Wisdom, Knowledge and Joy, and when Man shall have heard it upon earth and become imbued with its divine influence, he will attain the eternal consciousness of all these attributes.

NOTES

(1) *Esoterically* speaking, the effects of a Handel Oratorio are similar to those of a Grand Masonic Ceremony.

(2) These devices are intimately connected with ceremonial : they bring the soul into touch with the ceremonial of the higher planes.

(3) According to the Akashic Records this was long before Egypt was civilised, and long before the Pyramids were built.

(4) According to the Akashic Records, the first priest who was selfless enough pure-heartedly to serve humanity, was enabled to hear the music of the higher planes ; and to him it was given to know that whereas " Melody is the cry of Man to God, Harmony is the answer of God to Man." But although he was unable to translate what he heard into earthly sounds—the means being entirely lacking—it inspired him with the idea of introducing a greater variety into the existing musical phrases, so from that time onward, music very gradually became more diversified. It was then, and only then, that Man began to draw a certain inspiration from the song of birds. Thus music did not originate in the desire to imitate that song, as many people imagine ; it arose primarily from the instinct for petition.

(5) As the *mental body* is a more subtle vehicle than either the emotional or the physical, the subtle quarter-tone exercised an especial influence upon it.

(6) In occult parlance, whereas the quarter-tone affected chiefly the mental body, the third-tone affected chiefly the emotional body.

(7) The third-tone under certain conditions tended to loosen the emotional body from the physical, and so induce " astral trance."

(8) Nevertheless, Mankind will never fully comprehend this until they accept the doctrine of reincarnation ; then they will realise that their great men are more experienced souls who have been born in a particular country for a definite purpose ; they have come from an older civilisation to give their aid to a younger one. But it may be added that only the student of occult science is in a position to accept these statements.

(9) The Gregorian Chant, acting through the sympathetic nervous system on the mental bodies of the worshippers, caused them all to vibrate in unison.

(10) A Master has stated that Palestrina was the first European composer to restore music to its original function—that of constituting a definite link between Man and God.

(11) With regard to the cruelty and bloodshed which played such a part in the French Revolution, their cause is to be found in the pitch of excitement to which the French were aroused, thus rendering them, among other things, an all too easy prey to obsession.

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